



Reconnecting *the* West End

Final Plan

Our shared vision for reconnecting the West End is to overcome the barrier of I-77 by restoring and enhancing connectivity for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, removing unnecessary freeway ramps, redesigning Trade Street and Fifth Street, and reclaiming space for parks, greenways, and community-focused development.


CITY OF
CHARLOTTE

RECONNECTING THE WEST END GRANT PARTNERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	KNIGHT FOUNDATION	FIFTH THIRD BANK	LISC CHARLOTTE	WELLS FARGO BANK
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INTERAGENCY STEERING COMMITTEE

CHARLOTTE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - JULIAN BURTON <i>(RECONNECTING THE WEST END PROJECT MANAGER)</i> - JUSTIN CARROLL - KATIE WITHERSPOON - JOHANNA QUINN - DAVID SMITH - PAIGE HUNTER - ANTHONY MENDEZ - KATIE COGAR - ELINA SHEPARD	NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - SEAN EPPERSON - CHARLES AINSWORTH - THEO GHITEA CHARLOTTE PLANNING DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT - ERIN CHANTRY - WILLIAM LINVILLE - KATHY CORNETT	CHARLOTTE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM - JASON LAWRENCE - JIM FATULA MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK & RECREATION - KATIE LLOYD - BERT LYNN - KATIE DAUGHTRY CHARLOTTE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION - BOB COOK	CHARLOTTE CITY CEMETERIES - WILLIAM BIBBY CHARLOTTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - HOLLY ESKRIDGE CHARLOTTE HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES - RAQUISHELA STEWART CHARLOTTE TREE CANOPY PROGRAM - ERIN OLIVERIO
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CORE ADVISORY GROUP

CHARLES THOMAS, KNIGHT FOUNDATION	BERNETTA POWELL, WEST END FRESH SEAFOOD MARKET	AL AUSTIN, THIRD WARD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
BORIS HENDERSON, JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY	JOEL DANCY, FIFTH THIRD BANK	RYAN EVANS, HORIZON DEVELOPMENT PROPERTIES
FULTON MEACHEM, INLIVIAN	DAVID HOWARD, D.L. HOWARD CONSULTING	RODRICK BANKS, WELLS FARGO
SHANNON HUGHES, FIVE POINTS COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE AND THE WESLEY HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD	JORDAN BRASWELL, LISC – LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION	
	RUSTY MILLS, LISC – LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION	
	JOHN LINEBERGER, GRIFFIN BROTHERS	

CONSULTANT TEAM

NEIGHBORING CONCEPTS	KITTLESON & ASSOCIATES	STV	LANDDESIGN	SHOOK KELLEY	HISTORIC WEST END PARTNERS	GIBBS PLANNING GROUP
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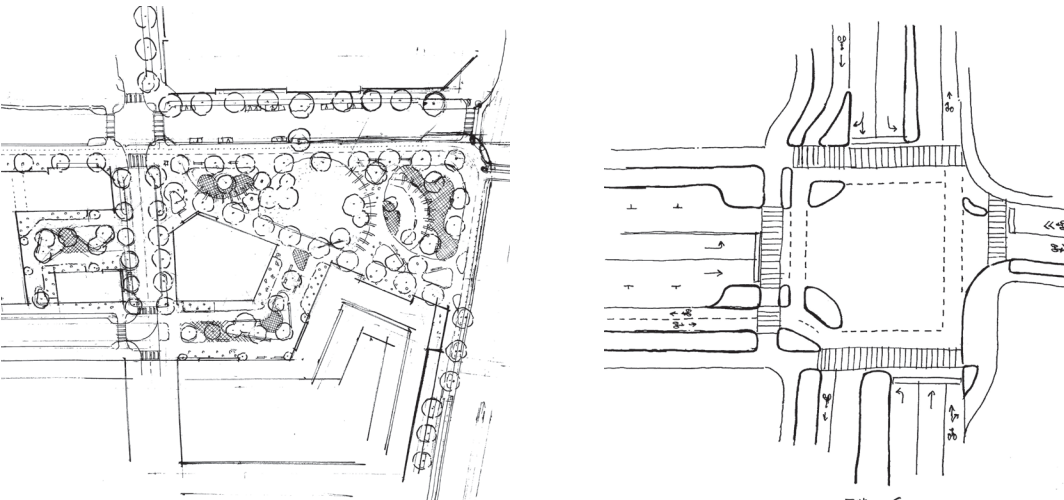
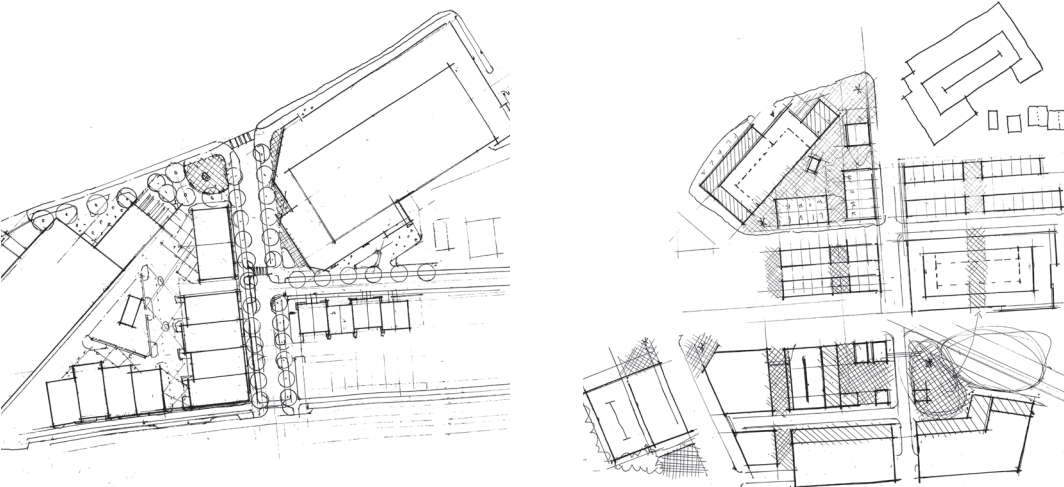
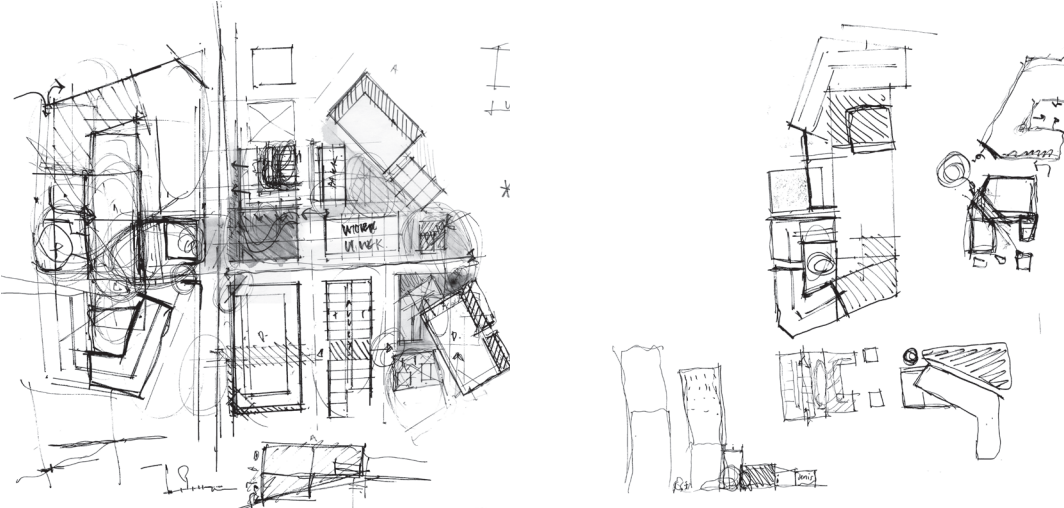
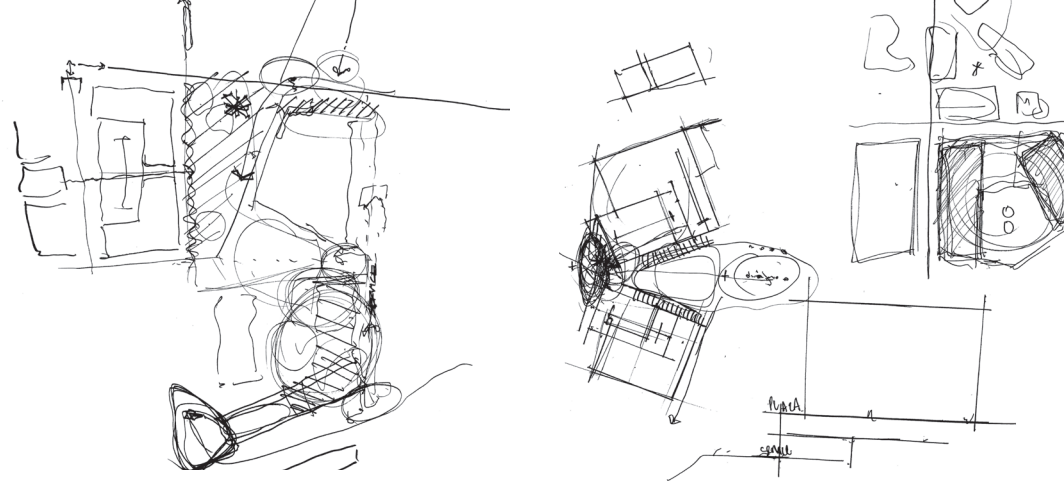


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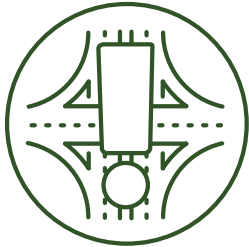
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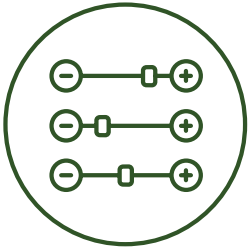
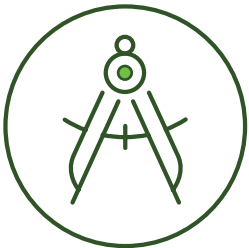
Executive Summary

Introduction

The purpose of the Reconnecting Communities Program is to help repair the harm caused by infrastructure choices of the past¹. By applying for and securing Reconnecting Communities Program grant funds, the City of Charlotte and their partners acknowledge that the construction of I-77 in the 1960s/70s caused harm to the West End in the form of displacement and separation. This Reconnecting the West End plan has been developed to provide solutions to help restore and reconnect the West End community.

The Reconnecting the West End project design goals, as described through the City of Charlotte’s Reconnecting Communities grant application and NCDOT’s accompanying letter of support, are as follows:

- 
 - **Reconnect:**
The reconnection of the West End to Uptown through the retrofit or mitigation of the existing I-77 facility.
- 
 - **Reprioritize**
The reconfiguration or removal of the interchanges at I-77 and West 5th/Trade Streets to meet demand while also prioritizing the safe and comfortable movement of people.
- 
 - **Reclaim**
The reclamation of land currently serving as a transportation facility to better connect the West End to adjacent communities and create community-centered housing, amenities, and public space.

- 
 - **Recalibrate**
The study of existing and future facility demand and level of service with I-77 corridor enhancements currently under evaluation through NCDOT’s managed lanes project.
- 
 - **Redevelop**
The development of plans and policies to support the inclusion of mixed-income and mixed-use development, as envisioned in the 5 Points Forward Plan, the plan for Charlotte’s West End developed by the community.
- 
 - **Redesign**
The selection of a preferred alternative which will result in at least 10% preliminary engineering and design plans for the preferred alternative.

¹USDOT. Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods. 2024.
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fe16ad992fc949e5b3d9f8d56659f9db>

The West End

Charlotte’s West End is a collection of diverse people, neighborhoods, and stories located just west of the city’s Uptown urban core. More than a single neighborhood, the West End is a constellation of historic communities shaped by shared geography, culture, and experience. Together, these places form a living cultural district with deep roots in African American history, creativity, and civic leadership.

Historic and Cultural Significance

The West End occupies a central place in Charlotte’s African American history and cultural life. It has long served as a center of Black intellectual thought, entrepreneurship, and community leadership. At the heart of this legacy is Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), one of the nation’s oldest historically Black colleges and universities. Founded in 1867, JCSU has been a historic catalyst for growth and a cornerstone of Black education and leadership for more than 150 years.

Neighborhoods and the Built Environment

The West End encompasses a collection of historic neighborhoods, including Biddleville, Smallwood, Seversville, Wesley Heights, McCrorey Heights, and others, that reflect a diversity of people, architectural styles, and development patterns. Together, they illustrate the evolution of Charlotte’s urban form, from early streetcar-era development to contemporary reinvestment. These neighborhoods contribute to a strong sense of place shaped by long-standing residents, faith institutions, local businesses, and community organizations.

Arts, Culture, and Community Expression

The West End is celebrated for its vibrant and enduring arts and culture. From the historic legacy of the Excelsior Club music venue to today’s emerging artists, murals, and creative entrepreneurs, culture is a defining feature of the area. Cultural expression in the West End is not symbolic or static. It is practiced daily through music, food, storytelling, public art, and everyday street life. Artists and entrepreneurs use culture as a tool for connection, pride, and economic opportunity, continuously renewing the area’s identity while honoring its legacy.





Transportation, Connectivity, and Infrastructure

Transportation infrastructure has profoundly shaped the West End, both as an asset and a challenge. The neighborhood is served by the Gold Line streetcar, a key rail transit resource that connects the West End to other parts of the city. The Gold Line has acted as a catalyst for new development and investment, while also reinforcing the West End’s role as an urban, transit-served community. Access to the Irwin/Stewart Creek Greenway system is another defining feature of the area. The greenway network is an important recreational amenity and a vital active transportation corridor, supporting walking, biking, and community connectivity.

Disconnection is also a defining feature of the West End. While I-77 is a critical regional transportation artery that supports economic growth and access to jobs, it has also functioned as a physical and psychological barrier, cutting off the West End from Uptown Charlotte.

Change, Investment, and the Future

Today, the West End is a growing and changing place. New investment is reshaping the landscape, bringing additional residential, commercial, and educational opportunities. This growth offers potential benefits, but also raises concerns about affordability, displacement, and the preservation of cultural identity. Against this backdrop, West End residents have sought ways to improve their connectivity to Uptown and support more inclusive growth that reflects the West End’s history while supporting its future.

Acknowledging Past Harm

Expressway Construction Through the West End

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the “North-South Expressway” (now called I-77) and the “Northwest Expressway” (now called I-277 / Brookshire Freeway) were constructed through the West End. These projects inflicted deep and lasting harm on West End neighborhoods. Highways were intentionally routed through historically Black neighborhoods weakened by redlining and public disinvestment, resulting in the demolition of entire blocks of homes, businesses, schools, and community institutions. More than 240 families were displaced, and parks, schools, and long standing businesses were destroyed.

The West End interchange (I-77 / W. Trade St. / W 5th St.) alone created a 43 acre barrier between the West End and Uptown, displacing at least 74 homes and businesses and disrupting the neighborhood street network.



He Huffed And He Puffed

More houses come tumbling down (this is on Fifth Street near Sycamore Avenue) as crews continue clearing land for the North-South Expressway. In the Queen City nowadays there is an almost constant crash as more and more buildings are demolished to make way for new streets, parking lots and buildings. The Queen is constantly having her face slapped, punched and pulled to smooth out old blemishes in preparation for new beauties.

Photo of homes being demolished to make room for the West End interchange. (Charlotte Observer. 1968.)

Creating a Community-Centered Plan

Building on Five Points Forward

The Reconnecting the West End plan builds upon much of the community input gathered as part of the Five Points Forward initiative in 2021. While the City of Charlotte was not involved in the development of the Five Points Forward plan, Reconnecting the West End seeks to advance the general goals of the Five Points Forward plan while focusing on infrastructure and development recommendations to help overcome the barrier of the I-77 corridor.

Building Informed Consensus

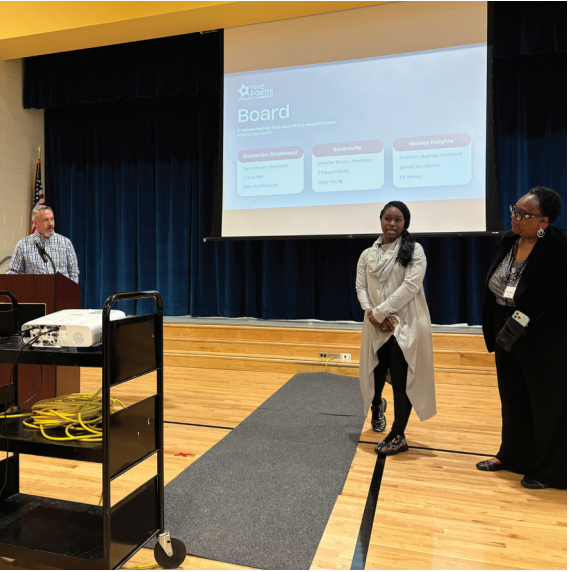
Building informed consensus brings community members and agency stakeholders together to develop a shared understanding of project goals, constraints, and tradeoffs and to achieve alignment on preferred solutions. For Reconnecting the West End, this approach is critical because of the breadth and diversity of stakeholders involved, the potential for competing priorities, and the community’s history of exclusion.

To build informed consensus, the project team relied on an iterative planning and design process that grounded decisions in both community values and technical realities. This process was guided by public engagement and input from a Core Advisory Group and an Interagency Steering Committee over the course of roughly 15 months.

- **Core Advisory Group:** The Core Advisory Group was a community group of ~14 people including community leaders, business owners, representatives from neighborhood associations and community based organizations, key local landowners, and representatives from key partner organizations and institutions in the West End. The Core Advisory Group met 6 times during the planning process to evaluate potential interchange design alternatives, refine an equitable development approach, and discuss potential implementation action steps.
- **Interagency Steering Committee:** The Interagency Steering Committee consisted of ~25 representatives from key public agencies. The Interagency Steering Committee met 8 times throughout the life of the project to establish guardrails for planning and design, emphasize individual agency priorities, and provide input on key recommendations and deliverables.



- **Public Engagement:** Public input was central to the development of the Reconnecting the West End vision. The project team facilitated broad, transparent, and authentic public engagement using a variety of in person and online techniques throughout the course of the project.
 - Pop-Up Meeting: The team held a pop-up meeting in the West End to introduce the project as part of the Sustain Charlotte Biketoberfest event on Oct. 28, 2024.
 - Project Website: Throughout the duration of the project, the City maintained a project website providing updates at critical points and posting opportunities for public input.
 - Public Design Alternatives Charrette: The Public Design Alternatives Charrette was a focal point of the public process for the Reconnecting the West End project. During the charrette the design team worked in a publicly accessible, open studio environment in the West End. This allowed residents, stakeholders, elected officials, and agency representatives to offer input and explore ideas for Reconnecting the West End in real-time with the project team. Over 100 residents attended the charrette over the course of two-days from March 25-26, 2025.
 - Digital Survey: The team used a digital survey tool to collect input from West End residents over the course of two months from April-May, 2025. Using written questions and a map-based platform, the survey asked participants to identify what makes the West End special, key community assets, current travel behaviors, and transportation barriers/challenges.
 - Town Hall Meeting Presentations: The team presented information and talked with residents at two Town Hall meetings in the West End on March 26, 2025 and January 15, 2026. The Town Hall meetings were hosted by the Five Points Community Collaborative, a coalition of West End neighborhoods in the area closest to I-77.
 - Public Pin-Up: The team hosted a public pin-up in the West End on February 17, 2026 to get feedback on the recommended vision for Reconnecting the West End. Over 40 people attended the public pin-up, including residents, stakeholders, elected officials, and agency representatives, to provide input on recommendations for new multimodal connections, parks and greenways, and community-centered development.



“ The West End could be a walkable neighborhood, with everything Uptown and everything the neighborhood has to offer within blocks of each other, if the infrastructure is offered and maintained. ”

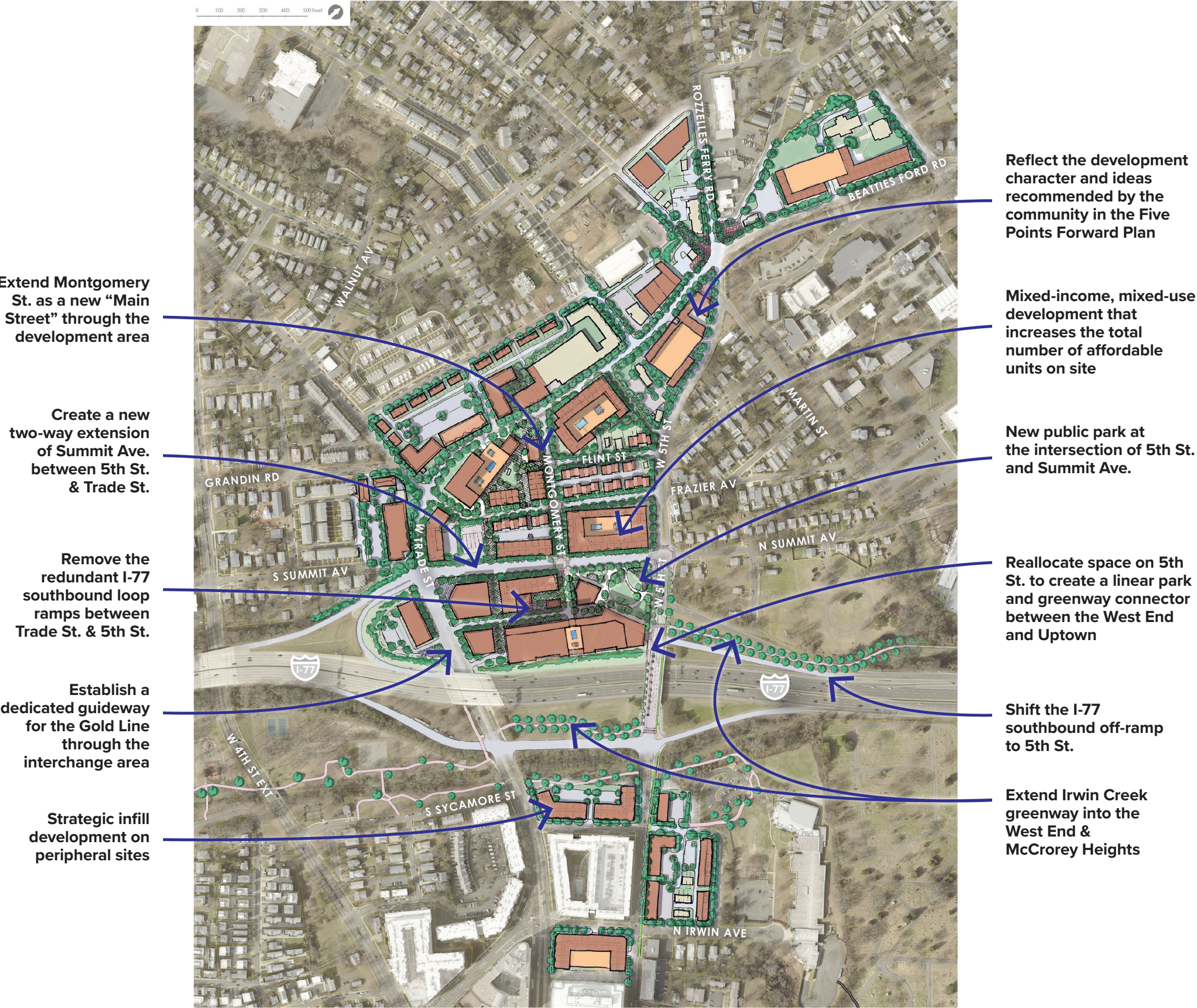
– West End Resident²

² Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. City of Charlotte. May 2025.

Our Shared Vision

Our shared vision for reconnecting the West End is to overcome the barrier of I-77 by **restoring and enhancing connectivity** for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, **removing unnecessary freeway ramps, redesigning Trade St. and Fifth Street, and reclaiming space** for parks, greenways, and community-focused development.

The plan at right illustrates a community-centered development strategy that aligns with the goals for Reconnecting the West End. This is just one potential future development scenario. Although other scenarios are possible, they should be aligned with the “big ideas” described on the following page and the project goals. The final development plan should be established in partnership between West End residents, the City of Charlotte, Inlivan, JCSU, Mecklenburg County Park & Rec, NCDOT, and private development partners.



	Big Ideas	Outcomes	Metrics
West End Interchange Reconfiguration	- Remove or shift the least used and least important freeway ramps - No impacts to adjacent properties	- Supports significant land reclamation - Creates space for the planned extension of Irwin Creek Greenway - Supports future travel demand	~12 ac of land reclaimed for community-centered redevelopment and public use
Multimodal Connections	- Create a new two-way extension of Summit Ave. between 5th St. & Trade St. - Create a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line through the interchange area - Improve multimodal safety at intersections	- Improves neighborhood connectivity - Restores some of the street grid removed by the construction of I-77 in the 1960s - Improves service times and reliability for Gold Line	3,600 LF of new separated bikeways / shared use paths 2,200 LF of dedicated guideway for the Gold Line 2,000 LF of new street network 7 intersections with safety and accessibility improvements
Parks & Greenways	- Create a new public park - Reallocate space on 5th St. to create a linear park between the West End and Uptown - Extend the Irwin Creek Greenway	- Provides new park space for West End and Uptown residents - Restores some of the land taken by I-77 in the 1960s for community use - Supports recreation and active transportation connections between the West End and Uptown	1.5 ac (or more) public park 3 ac of new plazas/squares/ public space 3,400 LF of new greenways
Community-Centered Development	- Advance mixed-use, mixed-income development - Create space for community-centered retail uses - Concentrate development intensity and structured parking along I-77 - Reflect the development character and ideas recommended by the community the Five Points Forward Plan	- Accommodates dense development while being sensitive to existing neighborhoods - Significantly increases the number of affordable units on site (60% AMI and below) - Utilizes Montgomery St. as a new Main St. connecting Trade St. to the new development area - Redevelopment of Tarlton Hills is phased to allow existing residents to remain on-site - Incorporates neighborhood-serving uses requested by residents	~6M sq. ft. of new community centered development 200,000 sq. ft. of new space for JCSU and community partners ~600 new affordable housing units ~1,900 new market-rate housing units \$42M/year of new retail activity \$4M- \$6M/year in new property tax revenue

Our Shared Vision: West End Interchange Reconfiguration

The plan for reconnecting the West End represents a shared vision that reflects the input of West End residents, West End businesses, West End institutions/organizations, and various public agency stakeholders. The shared vision for reconnecting the West End was established after developing, evaluating, and refining over a dozen design scenarios in collaboration with West End residents and public agency partners.

- **A Redesigned West End Interchange:** The recommended redesign of the West End interchange:
 - Eliminates redundant freeway ramps from the interchange by removing the least used and least important ramps;
 - Improves pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections between the West End and Uptown;
 - Creates opportunities for land reclamation and community-focused redevelopment; and
 - Maintains vehicular access between I-77, 5th Street, and Trade Street.

- This preferred alternative was selected and confirmed after:
- Thoughtful conversation and feedback from CDOT, NCDOT, the Interagency Steering Committee, the Core Advisory Group, other project partners, and the public;
 - A thorough evaluation of design criteria aligned with the Reconnecting the West End project goals; and
 - Iterative traffic modeling / scenario testing using NCDOT’s assumptions for future (2050) traffic volumes.

The recommended improvements support project goals, align with community values, and were found to effectively accommodate projected 2050 traffic volumes.

Proposed Changes

1. I-77 Southbound On-Ramp from Trade St.	No Change
2. I-77 Southbound Loop Off-Ramp to Inbound Trade St.	Reconfigure to eliminate free-flow, channelized, right turn conflict across Trade St. shared use path
3. I-77 Southbound Loop On-Ramp from Outbound Trade St.	Remove to support land reclamation and community-centered redevelopment; Also improves short weave section on I-77 southbound to/from Trade St.
4. I-77 Southbound Loop Off-Ramp to 5th St.	Remove to support land reclamation and community-centered redevelopment
5. I-77 Southbound Off-Ramp to 5th St.	Reconfigure to support planned extension of Irwin Creek Greenway and achieve better traffic signal spacing on 5th St.
6. I-77 Northbound Off-Ramp to Trade St.	No Change
7. I-77 Northbound On-Ramp from 5th St.	No Change
8. Summit Ave.	Extend to create new two-way connection between Trade St. & 5th St; Restores some of the street grid removed by the construction of I-77 in the 1960s

- **Reclaiming Land to Repair Past Harm:** By removing redundant freeway ramps, the proposed interchange redesign supports the reclamation of roughly 12 acres of land across 3 sites. The plan also acknowledges the likely future redevelopment of the roughly 6.5-acre Tarlton Hills affordable housing neighborhood.

The largest redevelopment area is a roughly 8.5-acre site between Trade St. and 5th St. When combined with the Tarlton Hills affordable housing site, this creates a 15-acre development area in the heart of West End with direct access to the Gold Line streetcar, regional greenways, and I-77. This is a transformational, once-in-a-generation, opportunity to support a major, community-centered, redevelopment that creates a new gateway to the West End and Uptown.

The redevelopment of Tarlton Hills will require careful planning and close engagement with current residents. Inlivian, the owner/operator of Tarlton Hills, has noted that the existing apartments are nearing the end of their useful life, and they hope to rebuild the site as a higher-density, mixed-income, mixed-use community that includes more affordable units. Redevelopment should be phased alongside new affordable housing on nearby sites so residents can remain in place until new homes are ready. This approach will increase the total number of affordable units on site without displacing current residents.

Land Reclamation

	SITE 1 Reclaimed land from removal of I-77 southbound loop ramps between Trade St. and 5th St.	SITE 2 Current Tarlton Hills affordable housing site	SITE 3 Reclaimed land within I-77 southbound off-ramp loop to Trade St.	SITE 4 Reclaimed land from shifting I-77 southbound off-ramp to 5th St.	TOTALS
Acreage	~8.5 acres	~6.5 acres	~1.5 acres	~2 acres	
Recommended Use	Combined redevelopment site with mixed-use, mixed-income development; High intensity development (~12 stories) along I-77, stepping down to more moderate intensity development (3-5 stories) near adjacent single-family neighborhoods.		Moderate intensity commercial/office development; Provides more consistent streetscape environment on Trade St.	Greenway / Park	

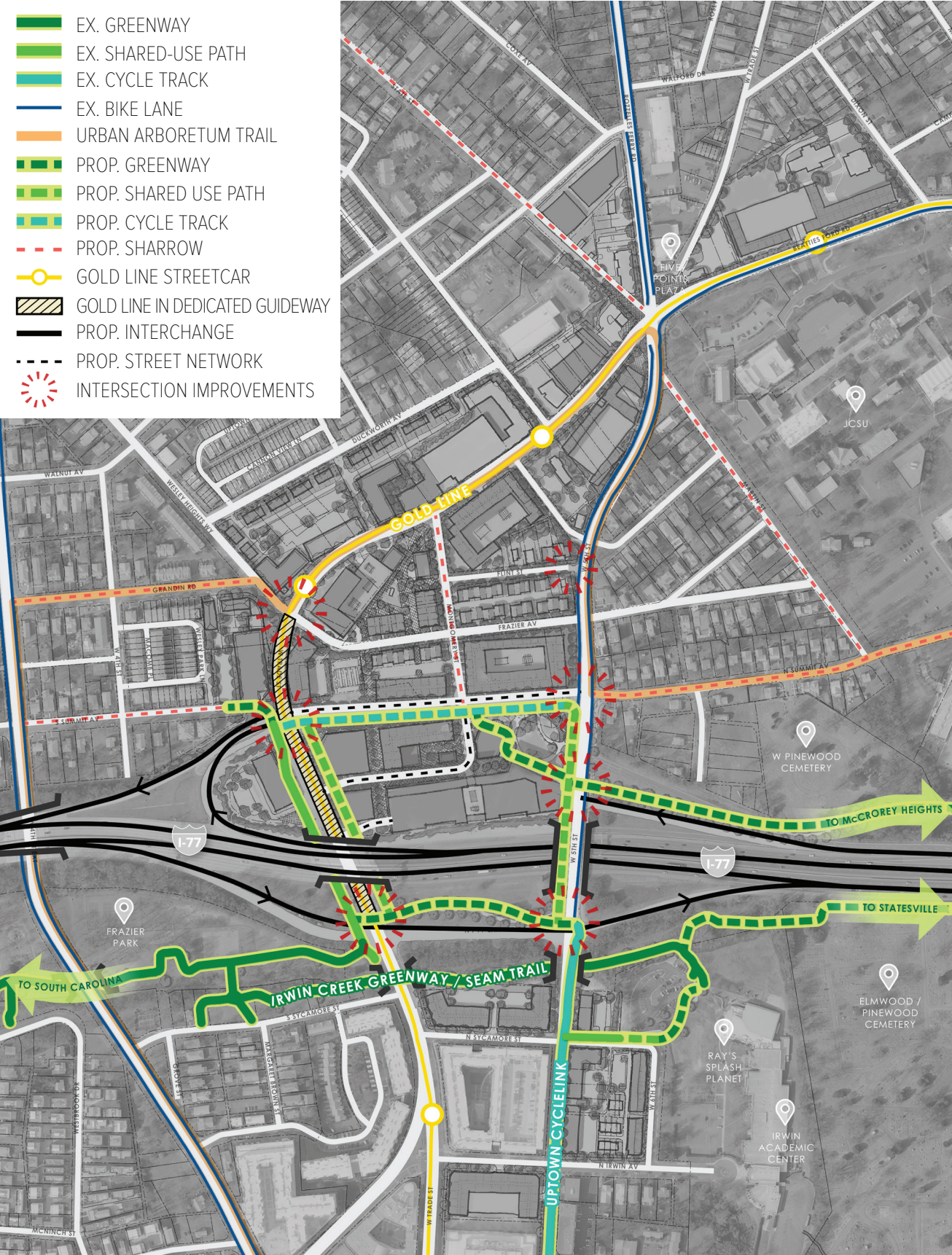
Our Shared Vision: Multimodal Connections

I-77 is a barrier for people walking, biking, and riding transit between the West End and Uptown. The shared vision for reconnecting the West End is focused on enhancing existing multimodal connections and restoring connections that were severed when I-77 was originally constructed.

Multimodal Network Plan: The reconfigured West End interchange provides an opportunity for key multimodal improvements that will reconnect the West End to Uptown. The diagram at right illustrates the future pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections that will support the safe and comfortable movement of people across the I-77 barrier.

Multimodal Network Plan

- EX. GREENWAY
- EX. SHARED-USE PATH
- EX. CYCLE TRACK
- EX. BIKE LANE
- URBAN ARBORETUM TRAIL
- PROP. GREENWAY
- PROP. SHARED USE PATH
- PROP. CYCLE TRACK
- PROP. SHARROW
- GOLD LINE STREETCAR
- GOLD LINE IN DEDICATED GUIDEWAY
- PROP. INTERCHANGE
- PROP. STREET NETWORK
- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS



5th St. and Summit Ave.

Key of Opportunity

- Local Business
- Affordable Housing
- Black Heritage
- Connection
- Natural Heritage
- Local Partnership



New development in land reclaimed from I-77



Mixed-use w/ mixed-income housing



Affordable ground floor commercial spaces



5th St. bike lanes and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure & crosswalks

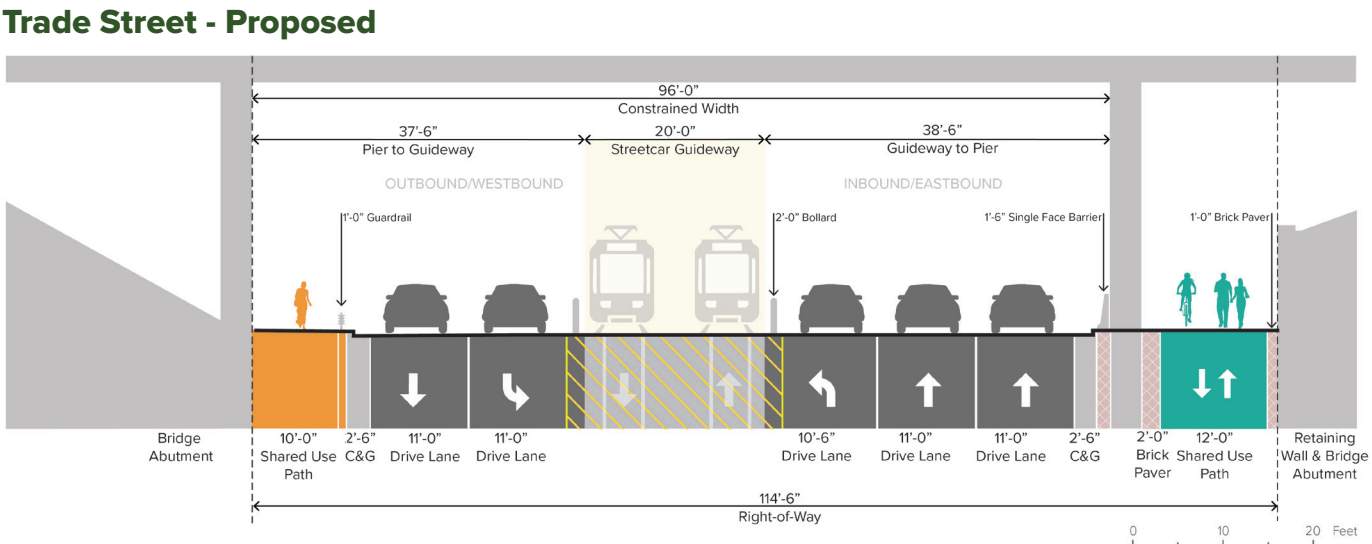
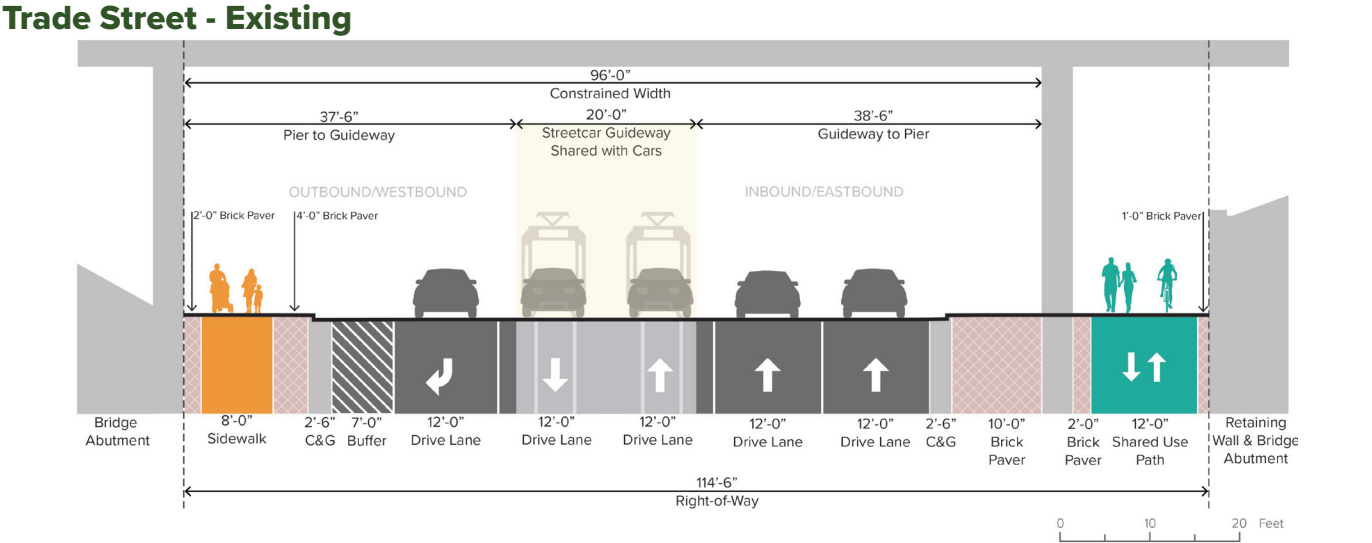


New community park with landmark elements celebrating local heritage

Our Shared Vision: Multimodal Connections

Trade Street / Gold Line Dedicated Guideway: Trade St. is reconfigured to establish a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line streetcar through the interchange area. A dedicated guideway means the streetcar would operate in an exclusive space, as opposed to sharing a lane with cars. This is especially important in the I-77 interchange area because the streetcar would not have to wait on traffic coming to/from the I-77 ramps, ensuring faster and more reliable service times.

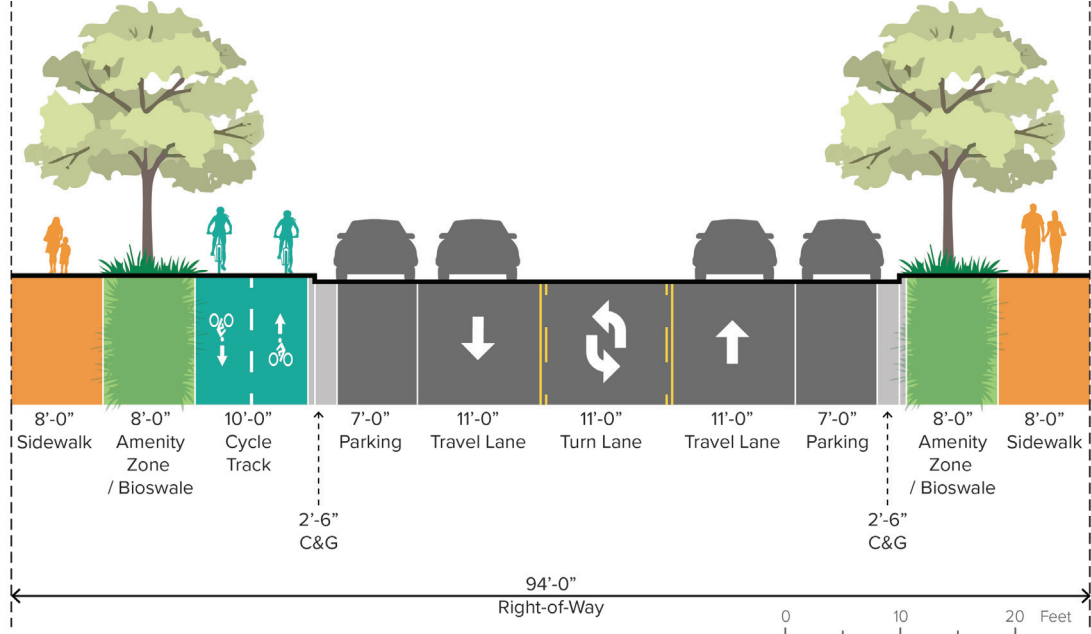
“The streetcar is great, but it needs its own lane.”
– West End Resident³



³Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. City of Charlotte. May 2025.

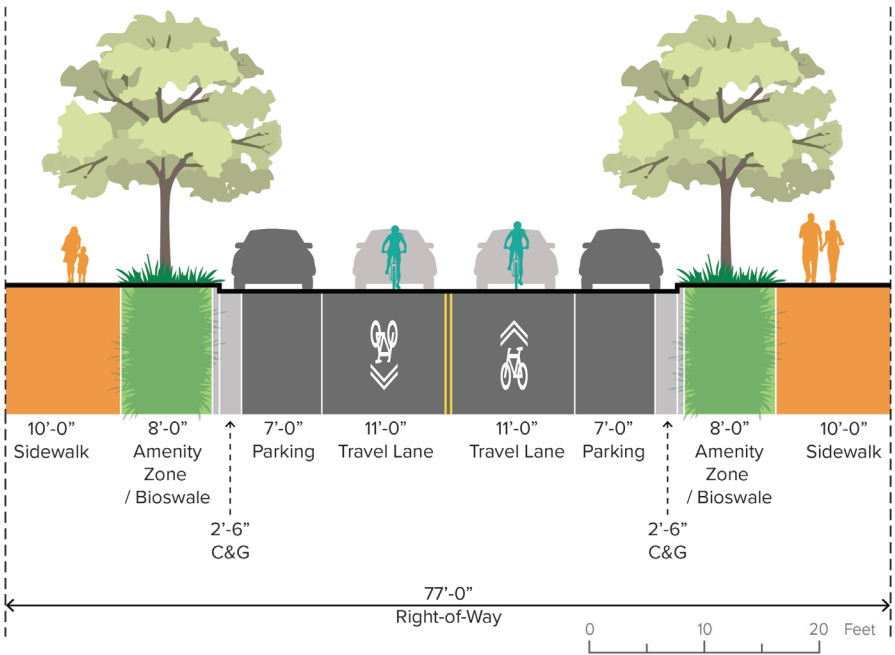
Summit Avenue Extension: The Summit Ave. extension restores some of the street grid removed by the construction of I-77. It creates a new signature multimodal street that links multiple pedestrian and bicycle routes through the West End and supports access to new development on land reclaimed from I-77. It includes a raised two-way cycle track, wide sidewalks, and green stormwater infrastructure.

Proposed Summit Avenue Extension



Montgomery Street: Montgomery Street will become a key connection between Trade Street and the new development area reclaimed from the West End interchange. It is envisioned as a local main street, lined with mixed-use buildings and retail storefronts, connecting The West Complex on Trade Street to the new proposed park.

Proposed Montgomery Street Extension



Montgomery St. and Summit Ave. Extension – Looking Southeast

Key of Opportunity

- Local Business
- Affordable Housing
- Black Heritage
- Connection
- Natural Heritage
- Local Partnership

- New recreation center with meeting space and café with seating



- Enhanced pedestrian infrastructure & crosswalks

- Green, multi-modal & traffic calmed streets with signature view paths to Uptown

- New development in land reclaimed from I-77

- Mixed-use development with affordable ground floor commercial spaces and mixed-income housing

Our Shared Vision: Parks & Greenways

The West End has long faced reduced park access due to redlining, disinvestment, and removal of park space for highway construction. In a recent survey⁴ West End residents highlighted “Greenways & Trail Connections” and “Parks” as the two most needed community facilities in the West End. Key park, recreation, and greenway recommendations for Reconnecting the West End include:

Establish a new, signature public park.

- Provides a focal point and organizing element for new development within the land reclaimed from the West End interchange
- Creates a recreational and civic gathering space in the heart of the West End
- Provides as a connection point and draws people in from the Irwin Creek Greenway, the Uptown CycleLink, and the recommended linear park along 5th St.
- Serves as an important historical acknowledgement and gesture, repairing past harm by restoring some of the land taken from the West End for the construction of I-77

Extend and integrate the Irwin Creek Greenway and Uptown CycleLink into the West End.

- Creates new, high-quality ped/bike experiences between the West End and Uptown
- Provides direct connections to existing ped/bike facilities and the planned Irwin Creek Greenway extension

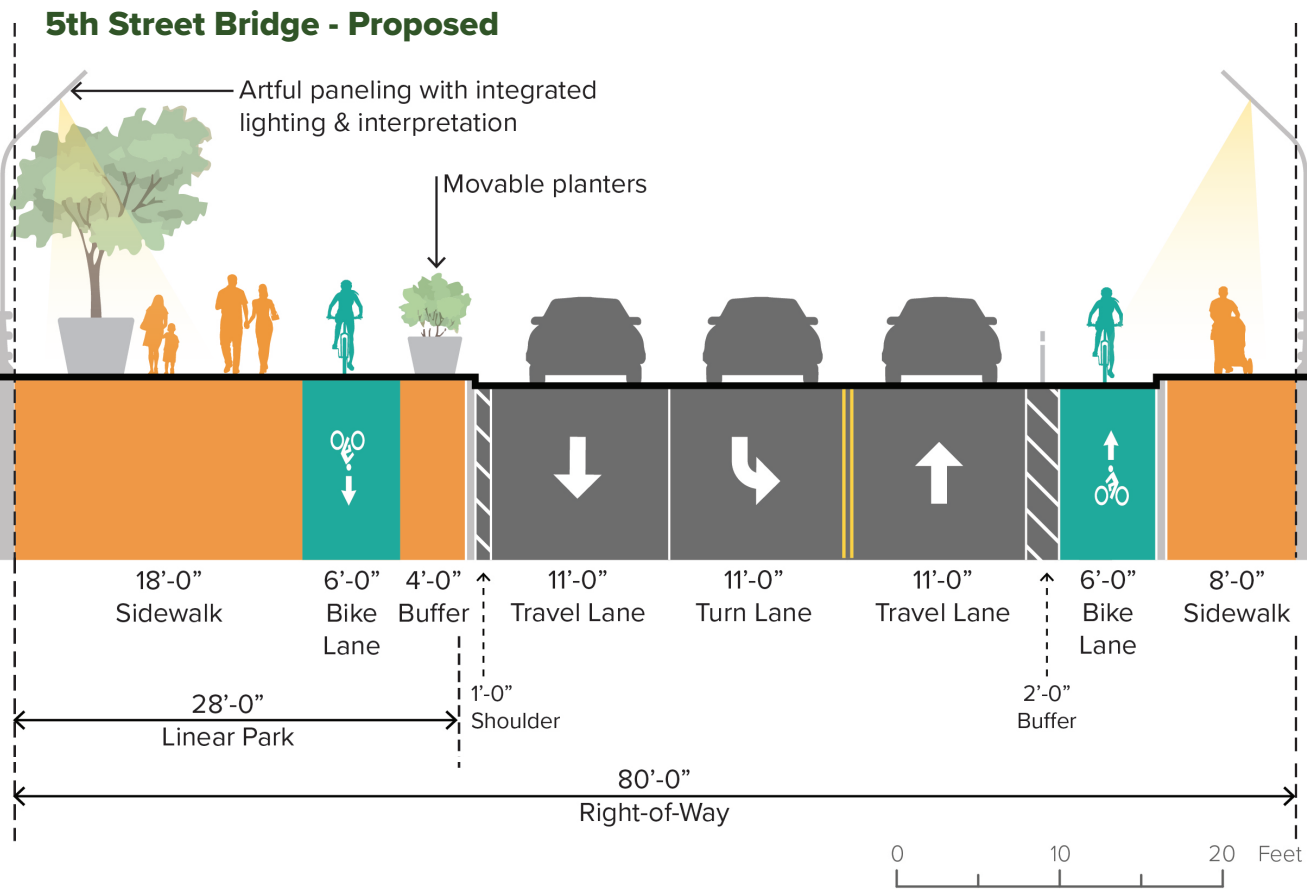
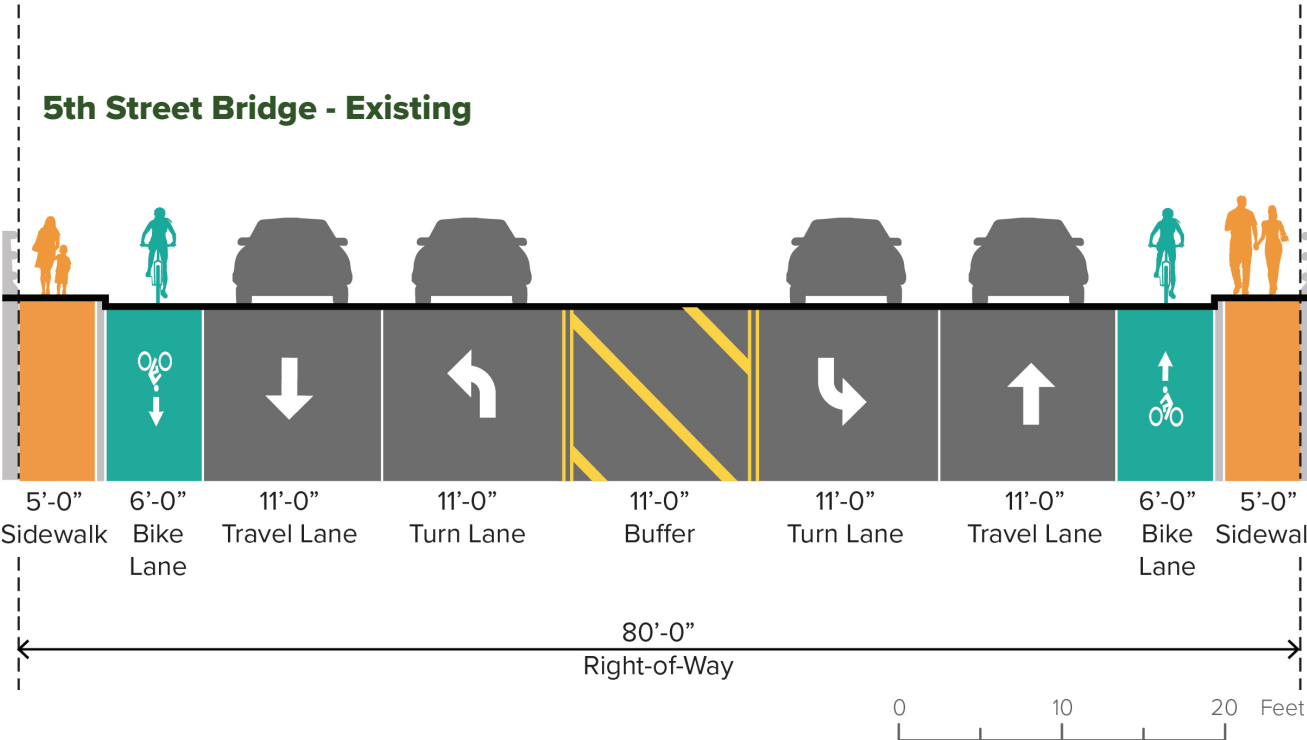
Create a public space network that enriches the redevelopment area and walking/biking experience.

- Link plazas, courtyards, and active street frontages throughout the redevelopment area
- Provides an opportunity for cultural/historical programming that lifts up the stories of the West End and its people

Create a linear park along 5th St.

- Reallocates space on 5th St. to create a linear park on the south side of the street
- Accommodates the planned extension of the Irwin Creek Greenway across I-77
- Improves pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the West End and Uptown

⁴Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. City of Charlotte. May 2025.

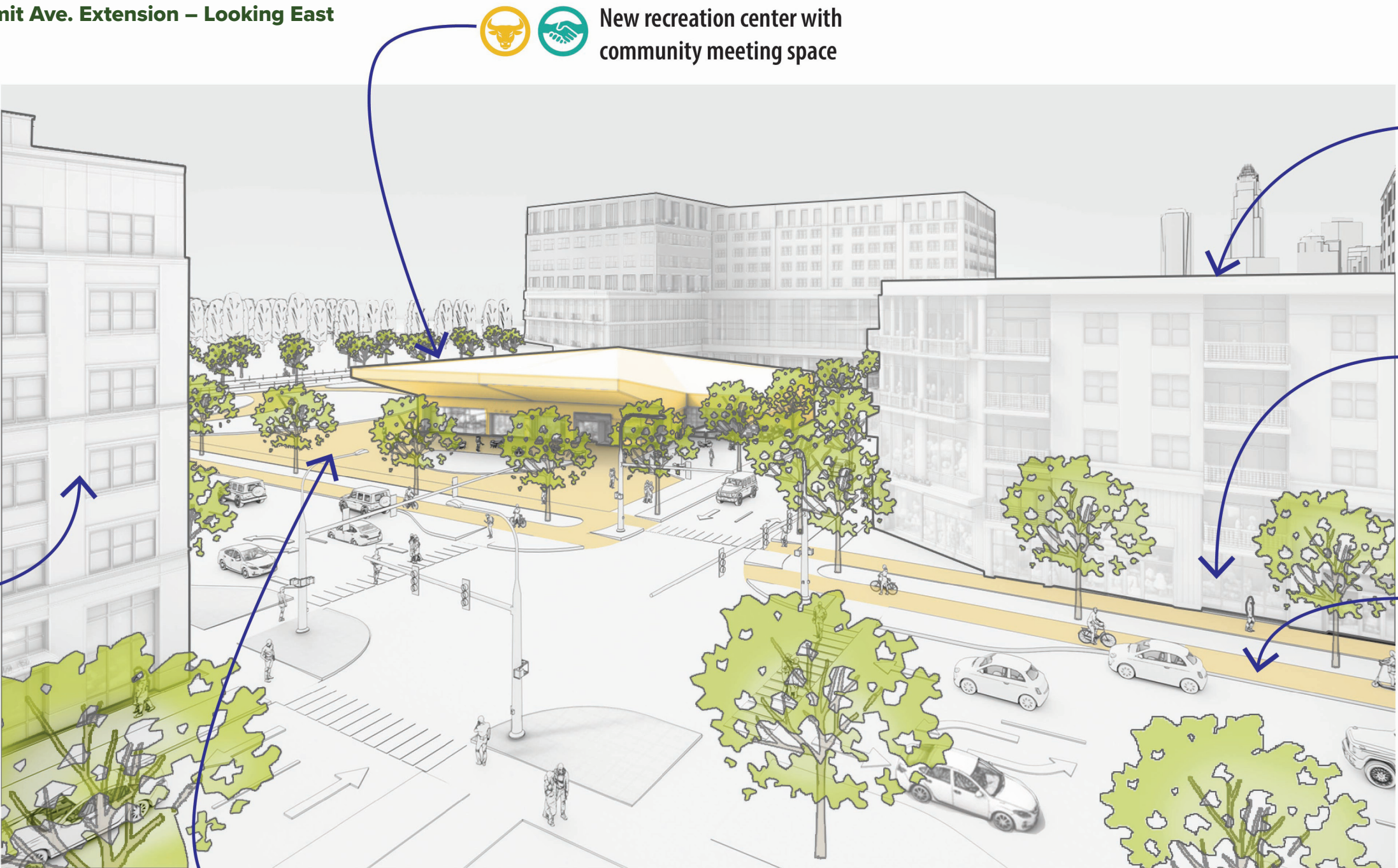


Montgomery St. and Summit Ave. Extension – Looking East

Key of Opportunity

- Local Business
- Affordable Housing
- Black Heritage
- Connection
- Natural Heritage
- Local Partnership

- Mixed-income housing



New recreation center with community meeting space

New development in land reclaimed from I-77

Affordable ground floor commercial spaces

Summit Ave. extension w/ raised two-way cycle track

New community park
(example elements include programmable events lawn, recreation center with community meeting space, playground, exercise equipment, gardens with native plantings, public art, and café with seating)

Our Shared Vision: Parks & Greenways

The design of the park and adjacent development could take many different forms. In this concept the park is shown at roughly 1.5-acres, although the redevelopment plan could be modified to increase the total acreage of the proposed park. This concept includes an events lawn, oriented to provide views toward the Uptown skyline, and a community center with community meeting space, restrooms, multi-purpose indoor recreation courts, a café, and other park-focused amenities.

With prominent frontage along 5th Street and the new Summit Ave. extension, the proposed park opens seamlessly to the adjacent West End neighborhoods, inviting residents into this vibrant new community destination. The park is oriented to create seamless connections between new development, the Summit Ave. extension with a raised two-way cycle track, and the Irwin Creek Greenway extension.

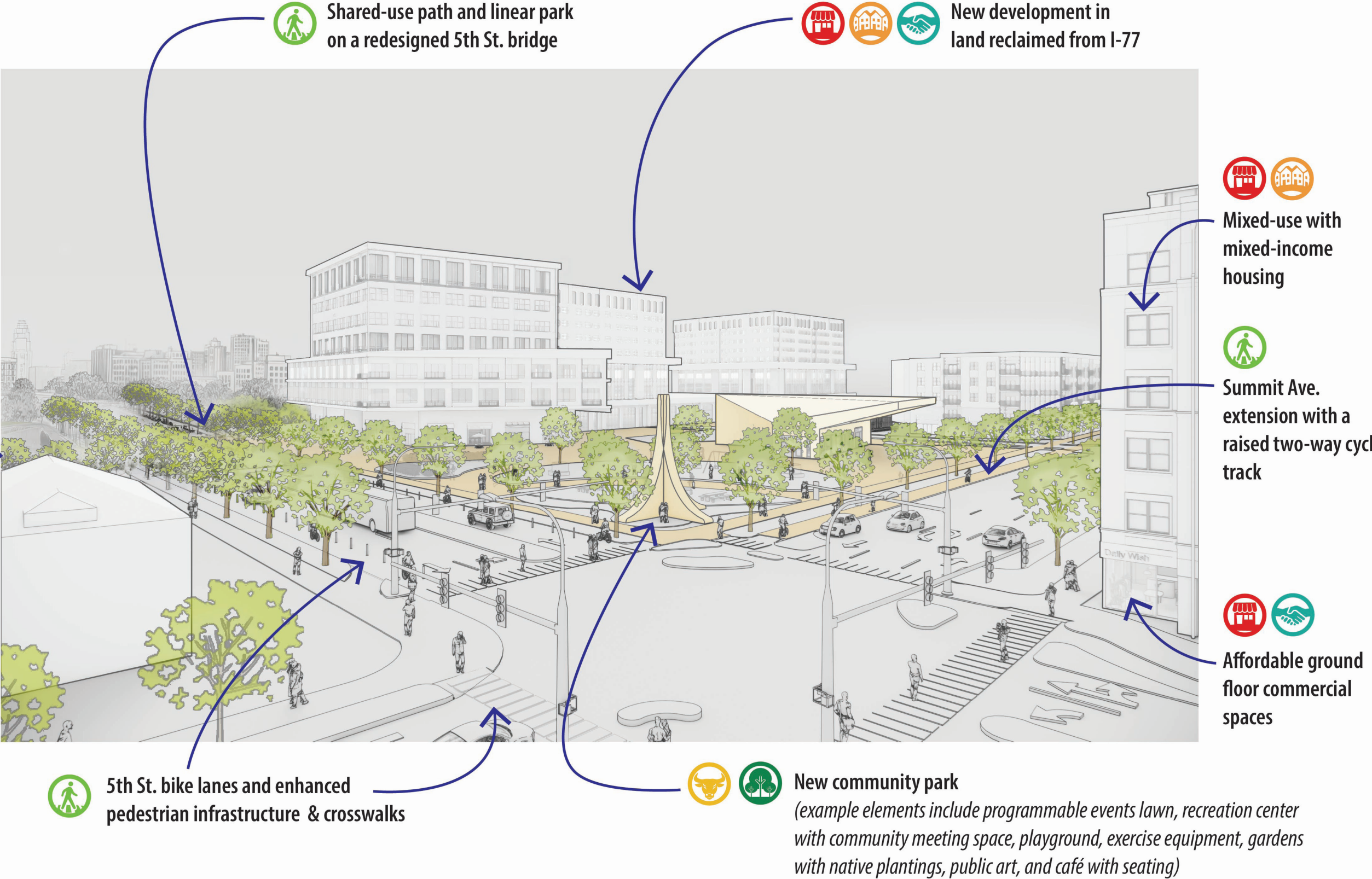


5th St. and Summit Ave. Extension – Looking Southeast toward Uptown Charlotte

Key of Opportunity

- Local Business
- Affordable Housing
- Black Heritage
- Connection
- Natural Heritage
- Local Partnership

- New Irwin Creek Greenway extension to Biddleville Park & Andrill Terrace



Our Shared Vision: Community-Centered Development

The Historic West End is the cultural and historical heart of Charlotte’s Black community, anchored by Johnson C. Smith University, legacy institutions, and long-standing neighborhoods. New development in the West End, especially redevelopment of land once taken from the West End for the construction of I-77, should be anchored in community values – preserving the history and cultural identity of the West End, while accommodating neighborhood-serving uses. Key recommendations for Reconnecting the West End through community-centered development are summarized below.

Pursue community-centered, mixed-use, mixed-income development that increases the number of affordable housing units on site.

- Residents indicated that expanding affordable and mixed-income housing options, with more senior services and senior housing opportunities, is a top priority for the West End.
- The scale and mixture of proposed development should include wrap-around support services for affordable and senior housing residents (e.g., childcare, career & financial counseling, benefits navigation, primary healthcare, etc.).

Accommodate vibrant, transit-oriented development while maintaining the unique character of existing West End neighborhoods.

- Concentrate development intensity and structured parking along I-77. Development should be tall along I-77 (12+ stories) stepping down toward Five Points and single-family neighborhoods.
- Organize development around a focal public space with a new signature pedestrian/bicycle connection across I-77 through the 5th St. linear park
- Reflect the development character and ideas recommended by the community in the Five Points Forward Plan.
- Utilize Montgomery St. as a new Main St. connecting Trade St. to the new development area.

Reconnect by integrating history and culture.

- As the seedbed of Charlotte’s civil rights movement, and a center of Black intellectual life and culture, the West End and JCSU have been home to some of Charlotte’s most extraordinary people and stories. New development should include culturally and historically relevant programming and arts installations that celebrate these important people and stories.



Top: Community-centered development means celebrating the special history of the West End and integrating arts and culture installations, like this example in the West Complex. Bottom: Community-centered development means expanding affordable housing, which could involve a mixed-income, mixed-use redevelopment of Tarlton Hills that is phased to ensure existing residents are not displaced.

Flint St. and Montgomery St. – Looking Southeast

Key of Opportunity

- Local Business
- Affordable Housing
- Black Heritage
- Connection
- Natural Heritage
- Local Partnership

Mixed-income housing

Mixed-use development with mixed-income housing

Mixed-income housing

Enhanced pedestrian infrastructure along Montgomery Street



Our Shared Vision: Community-Centered Development

The proposed development plan for Reconnecting the West End establishes a mixed-income, mixed-use urban district that is rooted in the surrounding community. By pairing a residential-led development program with significant investments in office, retail, and institutional uses, the plan supports everyday needs while reinforcing Johnson C. Smith University, Inlivan, and local civic assets as long-term anchors. This is just one potential outcome for community-focused redevelopment. Ultimately, a series of incremental decisions made by the City of Charlotte, NCDOT, Inlivan, and private development partners will determine the type and timing of future redevelopment.

A market analysis for the West End interchange area indicated that the proposed redevelopment plan would support \$42M/year of new retail activity and \$4M- \$6M/year in new property tax revenue.

-  ~2,500 housing units, including ~600 units (24% of total) which are affordable at 60% area median income or below
-  ~136,000 sq. ft. of new retail focused on locally owned businesses and neighborhood serving uses, like a new grocery co-op
-  ~1.2M sq. ft. office space providing access to employment opportunities in the West End
-  ~200,000 sq. ft. of new space to accommodate the expansion of West End institutions, like Johnson C. Smith University
-  1.5 acre (or larger) public park with new greenway connections

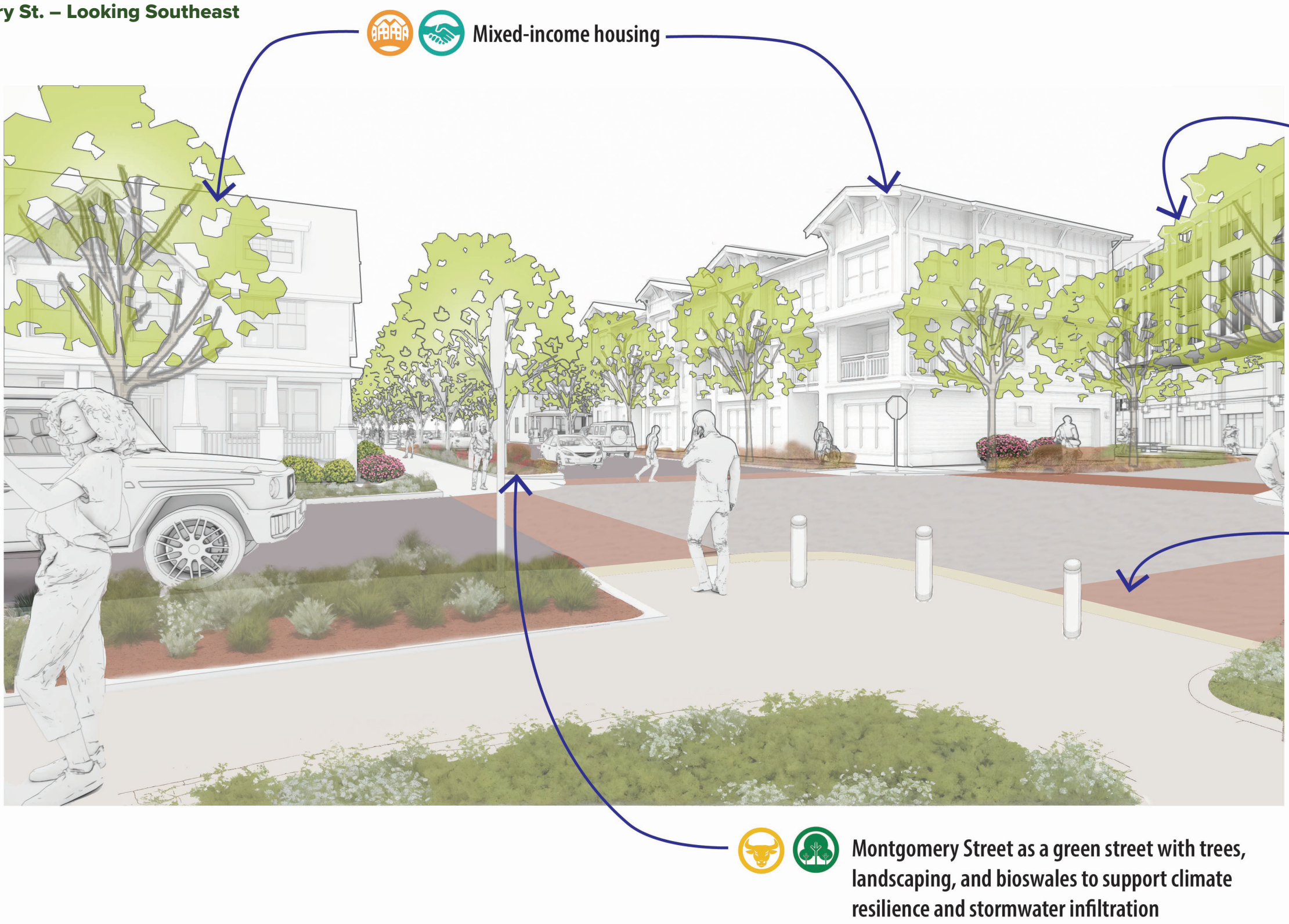
Proposed Development Plan



Flint St. and Montgomery St. – Looking Southeast

Key of Opportunity

-  Local Business
-  Affordable Housing
-  Black Heritage
-  Connection
-  Natural Heritage
-  Local Partnership



New mixed-use development along West Trade Street



Enhanced pedestrian infrastructure & crosswalks



Montgomery Street as a green street with trees, landscaping, and bioswales to support climate resilience and stormwater infiltration

Next Steps for Reconnecting the West End

The plan for reconnecting the West End includes a comprehensive set of recommendations for improving multimodal connections, expanding parks and greenways, and supporting community-centered development. Implementing these recommendations will require a series of incremental actions and investments by government agencies, community-based organizations, and private developers working in partnership.

At the time this plan was completed, there were still many unknowns about the I-77 South Express Lanes (I-5718) project. The potential design, timing, and viability of that project is a topic of ongoing conversation between NCDOT, the City of Charlotte, residents, and other stakeholders. If the I-77 South Express Lanes project moves forward, a critical step for reconnecting the West End will be to determine how the improvements recommended in this plan might be incorporated within the larger I-77 South Express Lanes project.

Based on all information available at the time this plan was completed, the recommendations for reconnecting the West End can be advanced with or without the I-77 South Express Lanes (I-5718) project.

Recommended Projects: The vision for reconnecting the West End is comprised of a series of interrelated infrastructure and development/redevelopment projects. The map at right and the table below illustrate the various individual projects that add up to the comprehensive vision.

Project Name		Modal Improvements			
		Pedestrian	Bicycle	Transit	Automobile
1	Removal of I-77 SB Loop Ramps between 5th St. and Trade St. & Development of Reclaimed Land Area W Trade St at N Sycamore St	x	x		x (improves existing weave section on I-77)
2	Shifting I-77 SB Off-Ramp to 5th St				x (improves existing weave section on I-77)
3	Summit Ave. Extension between 5th St. and Trade St.	x	x	x	x
4	I-77 SB Off-Ramp to Trade St. Redesign	x	x		
5	Gold Line Dedicated Guideway Conversion between I-77 Ramps			x	x
6	5th Street Redesign	x	x		
7	Outbound Trade St. Widening between Frazier Ave. and I-77 SB Ramp			x	x
8	Trade St. to 5th St. Greenway Connector	x	x		
9	Irwin Creek Greenway Extension from 5th Street toward Biddleville Park	x	x		
10	Irwin Creek Greenway Extension around Ray's Splash Planet Parking Lot	x	x		
11	Montgomery St. Streetscape & Extension	x	x		x
12	Development of New Park	x	x		
13	Tarlton Hills Streetscape Improvements	x	x		
14	I-77 NB Ramp at Trade Street Improvements	x	x		
15	Trade St. Shared Use Path Improvements	x	x		
16	Ped/Bike Connection Improvements from S. Summit Ave. to Trade St.	x	x		
17	Improvement of Flint St. Connection to 5th St.	x	x		
18	S. Summit Ave. Sharrows		x		
19	State St. Sharrows		x		
20	Development of Reclaimed Land Area in the I-77 SB Off-Ramp Loop to Trade St.		x		

Recommended Projects

- EX. GREENWAY
- EX. SHARED-USE PATH
- EX. CYCLE TRACK
- EX. BIKE LANE
- URBAN ARBORETUM TRAIL
- PROP. GREENWAY
- PROP. SHARED USE PATH
- PROP. CYCLE TRACK
- PROP. SHARROW
- GOLD LINE STREETCAR
- GOLD LINE IN DEDICATED GUIDEWAY
- PROP. INTERCHANGE
- PROP. STREET NETWORK
- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS



Action Steps: The table on this page presents the implementation actions for reconnecting the West End, translating the plan's recommendations into a clear set of actionable steps. It identifies key actions and responsibilities across various partners. This framework is intended to promote coordination and illustrate how individual, incremental actions work together to serve as a roadmap for implementing improved multimodal connections, expanded parks and greenways, and new community-centered development in the West End.

ACTION ITEM	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS (● = LEAD; ○ = SUPPORT)								
	CITY OF CHARLOTTE	MECKLENBURG COUNTY	NCDOT	CATS	CRTPO	INLIVIAN / TARLTON HILLS	JCSU	PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
1. Incorporate key Reconnecting the West End (RWE) recommendations within applicable adopted plans & capital investment plans.	●	●	●						
2. Amend the MTP to include the proposed RWE improvements.	○		○		●				
3. Coordinate with NCDOT to advance RWE recommendations.	●	○	●	○	○				
4. Amend the Charlotte Streets Map to reflect recommended streetscape improvements so that adjacent development supports implementation.	●								
5. Consider identifying a RWE Implementation Committee to oversee the implementation of infrastructure improvements and assist in the evaluation of development proposals.	●	○	○	○		●	●		●
6. Complete a community-based study to guide the design of the proposed park.	○	●				○	○	○	○
7. Complete preliminary engineering for RWE improvements to refine project design and cost estimates.	●	●	●	○					
8. Determine appropriate pathway for transfer and redevelopment of reclaimed land.	●	●	●			○	○	○	○
9. Construct infrastructure improvements to support new interchange configuration, new greenway connections, and land reclamation opportunity.	●	●	●					●	



Creating A Community Centered Plan

02

RECONNECTING THE WEST END

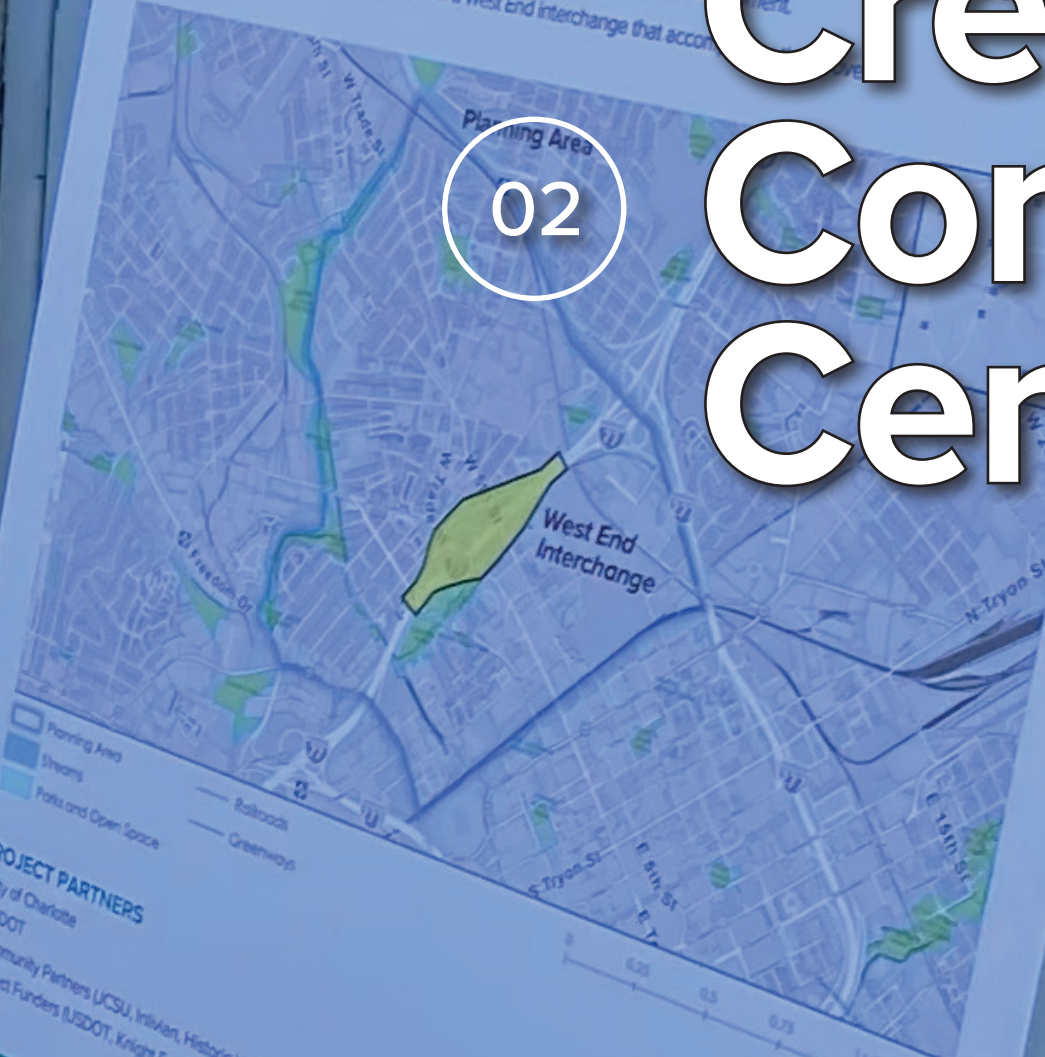
Project Overview

The construction of I-77 in the 1960's disconnected Charlotte's West End and displaced West End residents from their homes and businesses. The purpose of the Reconnecting the West End project is to study the West End interchange area (Interstate 77 / West Trade Street / West 5th Street) and deliver recommendations for overcoming the barrier of I-77 between the West End and Uptown. This project is being advanced in partnership with NCDOT and their evaluation of future express lanes on the I-77 South corridor.



PROJECT GOALS

1. Reconnect: Retrofit or mitigate I-77 facility to reconnect the West End to Uptown.
2. Reprioritize: Meet demand while also prioritizing the safe and comfortable movement of people.
3. Reclaim: Reclaim land from the interchange area to better connect the West End to adjacent communities.
4. Recalibrate: Understand future demand and design currently under evaluation.
5. Redevelop: Develop plans & policies to support mixed-income, mixed-use development.
6. Redesign: Deliver 10% engineering plans for a West End interchange that accommodates future growth.



PROJECT PARTNERS

- City of Charlotte
- NCDOT
- Community Partners: UCSU, Int'l, Historic West End Partners, Five Points Community Collaborative, and Project Funders (USDOT, Knight Foundation, Fifth Third Bank / USC, and Wells Fargo)

Introduction

• **Purpose & Goals for Reconnecting the West End:** The purpose of the Reconnecting Communities Program is to help repair the harm caused by infrastructure choices of the past¹. By applying for and securing Reconnecting Communities Program grant funds, the City of Charlotte, and their partners acknowledge that the construction of I-77 in the 1960s/70s caused harm to the West End in the form of displacement and separation. This Reconnecting the West End plan has been developed to provide solutions to help restore and reconnect the West End community.

The Reconnecting the West End project design goals, as described through the City of Charlotte’s Reconnecting Communities grant application and NCDOT’s accompanying letter of support, are as follows:

- **Reconnect**
The reconnection of the West End to Uptown through the retrofit or mitigation of the existing I-77 facility.
- **Reprioritize**
The reconfiguration or removal of the interchanges at I-77 and West 5th/Trade Streets to meet demand while also prioritizing the safe and comfortable movement of people.
- **Reclaim**
The reclamation of land currently serving as a transportation facility to better connect the West End to adjacent communities and create community-centered housing, amenities, and public space.
- **Recalibrate**
The study of existing and future facility demand and level of service with I-77 corridor enhancements currently under evaluation through NCDOT’s managed lanes project.
- **Redevelop**
The development of plans and policies to support the inclusion of mixed-income and mixed-use development, as envisioned in the 5 Points Forward Plan, the plan for Charlotte’s West End developed by the community.
- **Redesign**
The selection of a preferred alternative which will result in at least 10% preliminary engineering and design plans for the preferred alternative.

¹USDOT. Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods. 2024. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fe16ad992fc949e5b3d9f8d56659f9db>

• **NCDOT I-77 South Express Lanes:** During the development of the Reconnecting the West End Plan, NCDOT was planning for a major future investment to construct express lanes on I-77 between the Brookshire Freeway (I-77 / I-277) interchange and the South Carolina state line². Significant work has been completed by NCDOT to evaluate and plan for that potential project. NCDOT’s proposed designs for the I-77 South Express lanes and the West End interchange were constantly evolving throughout the development of this Reconnecting the West End study. The City of Charlotte collaborated with NCDOT and their I-77 South Express lanes project team to test interchange design scenarios, evaluate recommendations for multimodal connectivity, and advance a community-centered solution for the West End. (See the “Concept Development” section for more details on this coordination.)

Based on all information available at the time this Reconnecting the West End Plan was completed, the recommendations for reconnecting the West End can be implemented with or without the I-77 South Express Lanes (I-5718) project.

I-77 South Express Lanes project location map from NCDOT website



²NCDOT. State Transportation Improvement Program: Project I-5718. <https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/STIPDocuments1/NCDOT%20Current%20STIP.pdf>

THE WEST END

The West End Today

Charlotte’s West End is a collection of diverse people, neighborhoods, and stories, just west of Charlotte’s Uptown urban core. The West End is:

- Anchored by the Five Points commercial center, a historic African American commercial district;
- Home to Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), one of the nation’s oldest HBCUs and a historic catalyst for community growth;
- A seedbed of Charlotte’s civil rights movement - home to J. Charles Jones, a JCSU student who initiated the Charlotte lunch counter sit-ins in February of 1960³;
- Celebrated for its arts and culture, from the echoes of concerts at the Excelsior Club to remarkable new artists and murals;
- Home to historic neighborhoods showcasing a diversity of people and architecture⁴, including Biddleville, Smallwood, others;
- A growing place where new investment continues to change the landscape, providing new residential, commercial, and educational opportunities, while also challenging the area’s affordability and cultural identity.

See *Appendix C: Existing Conditions & Interchange Operations Analysis* for a comprehensive overview of the people, places, and connections that define the West End today.

The West End is a living cultural district with a powerful legacy of African American history, creativity, and expression. From music, food, and storytelling to public art and everyday street life, culture in the West End is not symbolic. It is practiced, shared, and continuously renewed. The area’s cultural vibrancy reflects its historic significance and contemporary innovation shaped by artists and entrepreneurs who use culture as a tool for connection, pride, and economic opportunity.

³5 Points Forward Plan. 2021. <https://www.hwep.org/west-end-plans>

⁴Historic West End Partners. 2024. <https://www.hwep.org/>



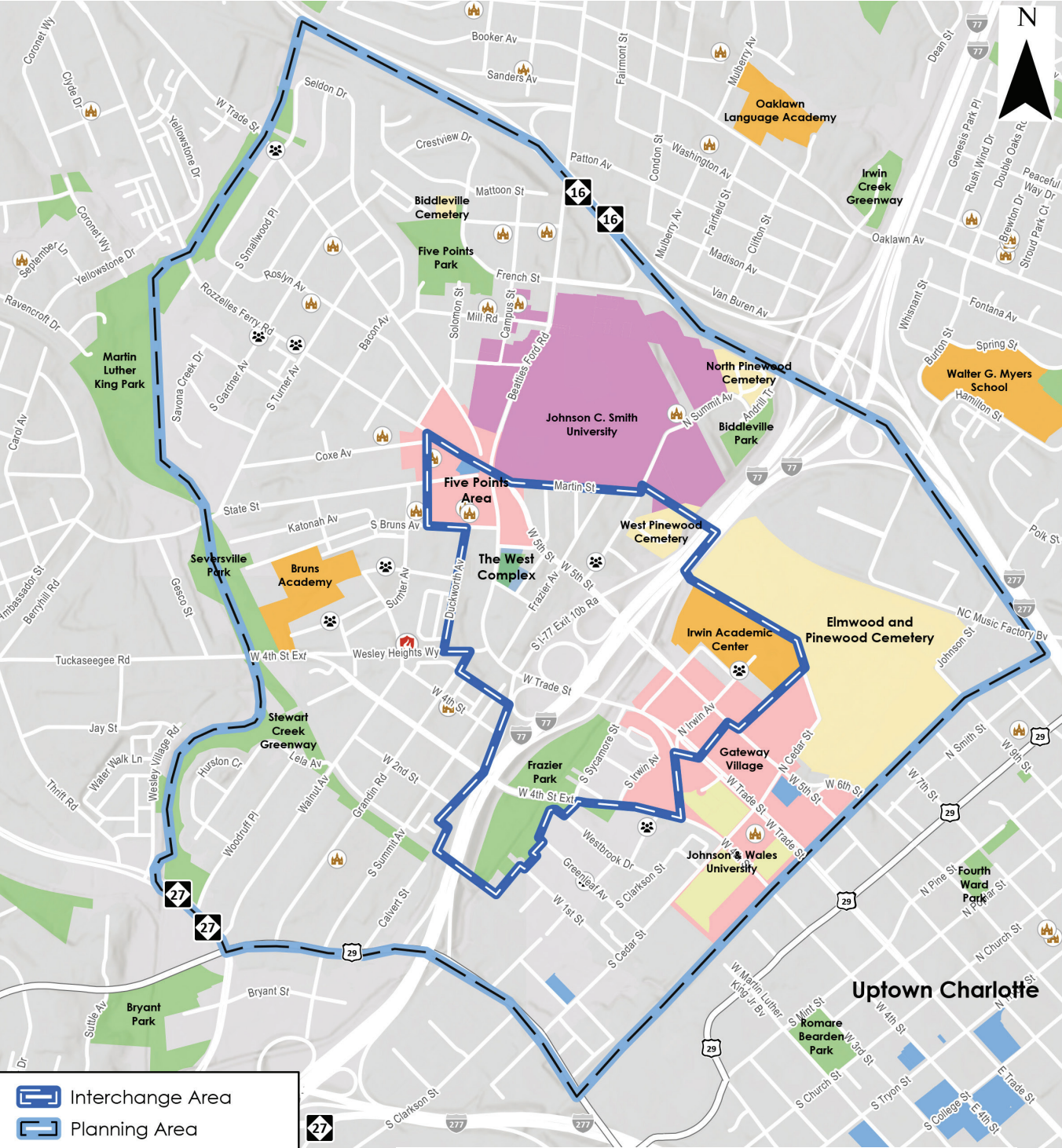


• **Community Assets:** The West End is rich in community assets anchored by long-standing institutions such as JCSU, faith-based organizations, local businesses, and deeply rooted neighborhood associations. The West End has long functioned as a center of leadership, education, and Black culture. Its residents carry generations of civic knowledge, entrepreneurial skill, and cultural stewardship -assets that have sustained the community through periods of disinvestment, growth, and change.

Unique assets within the Reconnecting the West End planning area include:

- JCSU – a historic center for education, community formation, civil rights, and cultural heritage;
- Frazier Park – Uptown’s largest park and an important recreational asset for West End residents;
- Elmwood/Pinewood Cemetery & West Pinewood Cemetery – two cemeteries, separated by the construction of I-77, which are regarded as sacred spaces and support significant daily use from families, walkers, runners/joggers, and cyclists;
- Irwin/Stewart Creek Greenway Network – provides critical connections supporting daily pedestrian bicycle commuting, recreational activity, and community interaction;
- Irwin Academic Center & Bruns Academy – two local elementary schools and community gathering spaces, Irwin Academic Center was formerly Harding High School which was integrated in 1957;
- Five Points – a hub for local business and a civic gathering place.

COMMUNITY ASSETS & CULTURAL RESOURCES

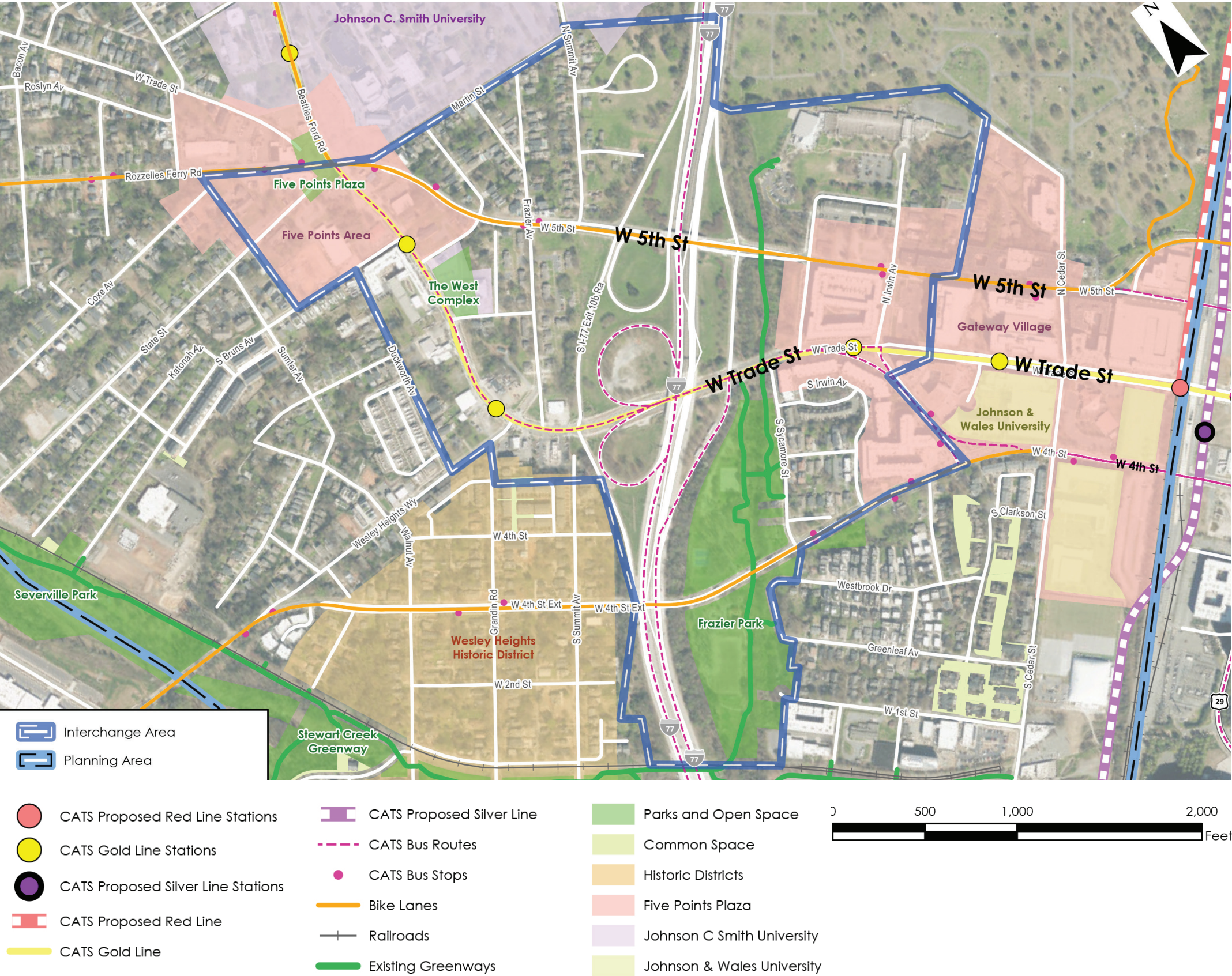


Public Schools	Cemeteries	Churches
Johnson C Smith University	Parks and Open Space	Fire Stations
Johnson & Wales University	The West Complex	Daycare and Child Care Facilities
Medical Facilities	Community Areas	



• **The Importance of I-77 Today and In the Future:**
Interstate 77 is a critical transportation artery for Charlotte, supporting regional mobility, economic growth, and access to jobs. I-77 has profoundly shaped the West End, both as a vital regional connector and as a physical and psychological barrier that has fractured neighborhoods and caused significant displacement of people and property. Today, The Reconnecting West End project is a generational opportunity to reimagine this important infrastructure, repair past harms, overcome barriers, improve safety and connectivity, and provide a platform for inclusive growth.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES



West End & I-77 History

In the early 1960's the West End was an economic and intellectual powerhouse for Charlotte's Black middle and upper classes. The Beatties Ford Rd. / Trade St. corridor served as a Black Main St. supporting academic life and civil rights activism, and a catalyst for Black development. Around this time the City of Charlotte began an urban renewal program in the nearby Brooklyn neighborhood, a predominantly African-American neighborhood in Uptown. Over 1,000 families were displaced from Brooklyn. Many of them sought refuge in the West End, increasing the West End's importance as one of the last remaining refuges for Black culture and economic life in Charlotte. It was in this context that the construction of the "North-South Expressway" (now called I-77) and the "Northwest Expressway" (now called I-277 / Brookshire Freeway) occurred in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

These highway construction projects inflicted deep and lasting harm on the West End. Entire blocks of homes, businesses, schools, and community institutions were condemned and demolished to make way for the highway network, which was intentionally routed through predominantly Black neighborhoods whose property values were already weakened by redlining and public disinvestment. In total, the expressway projects displaced more than 240 West End families and destroyed cultural anchors such as the Biddleville School, parts of Irwin Avenue Junior High, Lincoln Heights School, Biddleville Park, and beloved local establishments like the Sportsman's Grill and Club Bali.⁵

For residents, these losses were not limited to the physical erasure of homes and gathering places. They represented the fracturing of a thriving, self-sustaining community. The placement of I-77 and I-277 created a physical barrier separating the West End from Uptown Charlotte, reinforcing racial and economic divides that had already been codified through decades of discriminatory housing and planning policies.

In particular, the West End interchange (i.e. I-77 / 5th Street / Trade St. interchange) created a 43-acre barrier and displaced 74 buildings⁶ (homes and businesses). The resulting physical, social, and economic separation has had a significant and long-lasting negative impact on the West End community.

⁵ Highways and the West End. JCSU. James B. Duke Memorial Library. 2026. <https://www.westendcharlotte.org/highway/>

⁶ Count based on 1953 Sanborn fire insurance maps for Charlotte, NC

Headline from an April 4, 1962 Charlotte Observer article describing public outcry to the proposed impacts from freeway construction in the West End. (Charlotte Observer. 1962.)



Highway Department's McGowan Explains Route Of Expressway
Observer Photos by Mike Mauney

Negro Residents Want Expressway Rerouted

By JERRY SHINN
Observer Staff Writer

The pattern of racial segregation has fortified a minor obstruction in the path of the Northwest Expressway.

The projected path of the \$10-million expressway, the first phase of a 20-year Charlotte Thoroughfare Plan, would cut across the McCrory Heights community, one of the finest Negro residential areas in the city.

At a public hearing on the expressway project Tuesday at Owens Auditorium, residents of the area begged state and local officials to reroute the expressway.

R. W. McGowan of the State Highway Department assured them that every effort would be made to change the expressway route, but he would not assure them that it could be done.

Major urban road projects almost invariably uproot persons from their property, but the McCrory Heights residents argued that their problem was unusual because there are almost no other comparable neighborhoods to which Negroes can move.

Rev. J. W. Smith said, "I don't want to inject any unpleasantness, but if you live as a minority, it's hard to get a first class place."

"This is not a criticism, or a suggestion, but an appeal,"

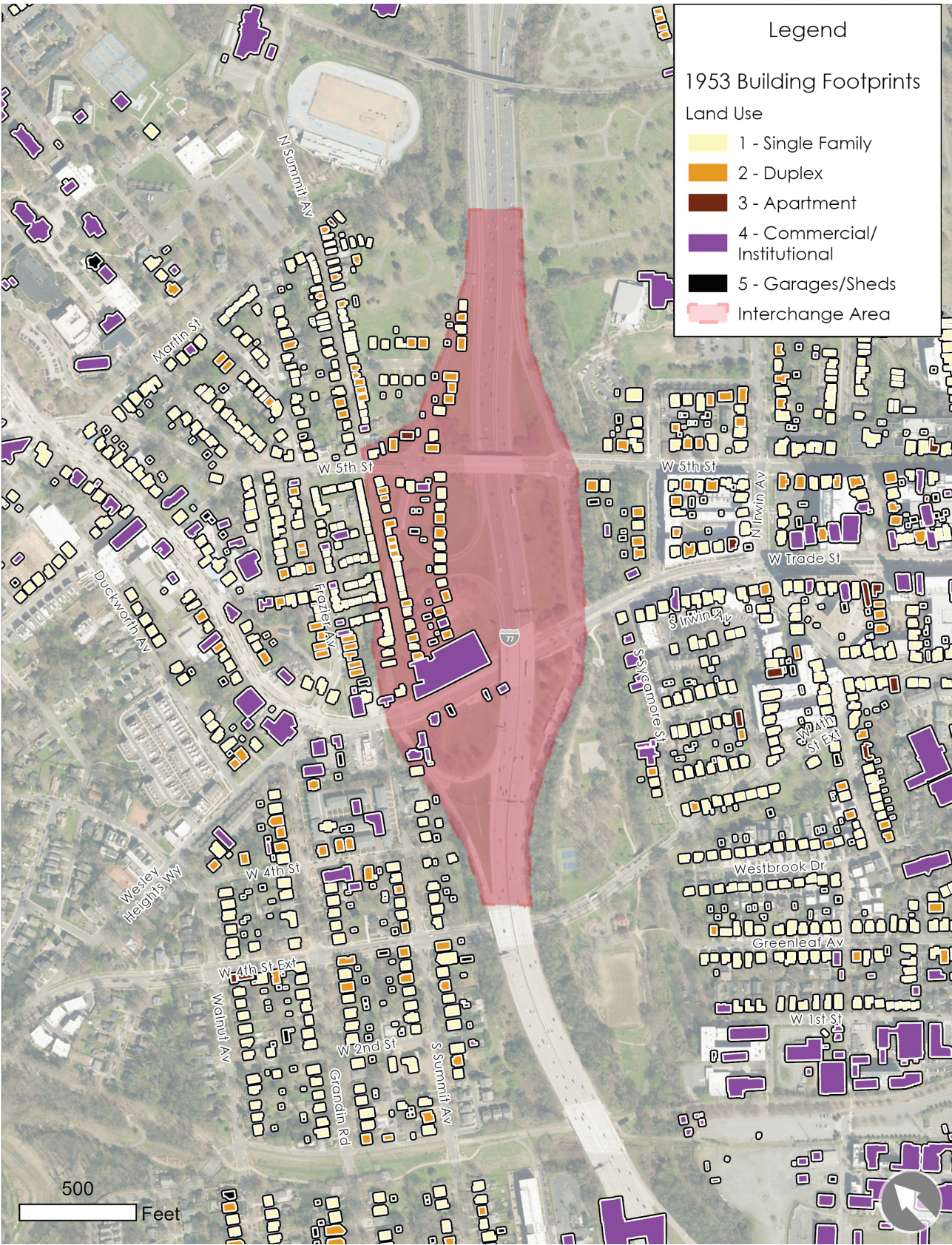
Smith said, "If it was the only way, we wouldn't stand in the way of the progress of the great city of Charlotte."

Smith and other spokesmen for the group said they felt an alternate route to that point would be feasible.

Mrs. J. T. Jones, another resident of the area, said, "There is a choice here of what kind of progress should be made."

"McCrory Heights represents progress," she said, "the kind of progress our people need."

The expressway as projected would cut across the area near the intersection of Van Buren



Left: At least 74 buildings (homes and businesses) and the Irwin Avenue Junior High Football Field were condemned and demolished to make room for the West End interchange. Most impacts were on the west side of Irwin Creek in a historically African-American community. Below, Right: Photo of homes being demolished to make room for the West End interchange. (Charlotte Observer. 1968.)



- **I-77 as a Barrier:** One of the defining geographic characteristics of the West End, is its separation from Uptown by Interstate 77. When I-77 was constructed in the 1960's/70s it created a two-mile barrier dividing the West End from Uptown, with limited opportunities to get across I-77, an interrupted street network, substandard sidewalks, and a lack of comfortable bicycle facilities. Improving multimodal connections is the first goal for reconnecting the West End to Uptown.

Distance across I-77: This map illustrates the distance across I-77 for the few corridors that cross the highway. Measurements are provided for the distance across the highway right-of-way (in purple). Measurements are also provided for the distance between buildings (in black), which is often a proxy for the perceived walking/ biking distance across a barrier like a highway. (Note – the distance between buildings is not provided for the Wesley Heights Greenway Connector because it is not as relevant for perception of walking/ biking distance for an off-street greenway corridor.) The typical crossing distance of I-77 is around 800'. For the sake of comparison, the length of a typical Uptown block is ~450'.



- In a recent survey⁷ of West End residents / visitors:
- 69% of respondents agreed that I-77 is a barrier for walking between the West End and Uptown
 - 58% of respondents agreed that I-77 is a barrier for biking between the West End and Uptown

⁷ Highways and the West End. JCSU. James B. Duke Memorial Library. 2026. <https://www.westendcharlotte.org/highway/>

BUILDING INFORMED CONSENSUS

Building informed consensus is the process through which community members and agency stakeholders develop a shared understanding of project goals, constraints, and tradeoffs, and then work toward an agreement on preferred solutions. Building informed consensus is especially important for Reconnecting the West End because of:

- The large number of public agencies, neighborhood organizations, businesses, institutions, and residents that have an interest in the West End;
- The possibility of competing values and priorities among these stakeholders; and
- The history of West End residents being excluded from decisions that shaped their community.

Informed consensus acknowledges differing viewpoints and uses them to shape solutions that are broadly understood and supported, even if not unanimously endorsed. It emphasizes transparent and authentic engagement, equipping all participants to contribute and help make decisions grounded in both community values and technical realities.

Building on Five Points Forward: This study builds upon much of the community input gathered as part of the Five Points Forward initiative in 2021. That was a grass-roots effort led by Historic West End Partners, West End residents, local businesses, and partner organizations to strengthen the Five Points neighborhood center and, among other goals, explore options that help mitigate the I-77 barrier between the West End and Uptown. While the City of Charlotte was not involved in the development of the Five Points Forward Plan, Reconnecting the West End seeks to advance the general goals of the Five Points Forward Plan while anchoring the infrastructure and development recommendations in the latest information about potential plans for the I-77 corridor.

Goals for Community Engagement: The engagement process for Reconnecting the West End acknowledged that the history of inequality in Charlotte still affects the people of the West End due to the long-lasting impact of highway construction on the West End and surrounding areas. Goals for the engagement process were:

1. Bring People Together: Effective and Ongoing Community Participation
2. Elevate Community Voices: Inclusive Collaboration Based on the IAP2 Spectrum for Public Participation
3. Check and Adjust Our Bearings: Data-Driven Consensus Building
4. Define the Community’s North Star: Community-Driven Planning Principles
5. Build up Trust for Collaboration: Empowering Local Partnerships and Participatory Structures
6. Put the Plan into Action Together: Collaborative Implementation for Reconnecting the West End

See *Appendix B: Community Engagement Summary* for more details on the strategies used to support these goals and engage West End residents, businesses, and partner organizations.

Project Guidance

To build informed consensus, the Reconnecting the West End project team relied on two primary stakeholder groups, in addition to input from West End residents.

- **Core Advisory Group:** The Core Advisory Group was a community group that included key local landowners, business owners, community leaders, representatives from key partner organizations, institutions, and representatives from neighborhood associations and community-based organizations in the West End.



Core Advisory Group

- The purpose of this group was to:
- Represent the diverse interests and voices of the West End community;
 - Build trust between the people of the West End and the public agencies responsible for the West End interchange;
 - Help align future investment with the community’s needs and vision; and
 - Support engagement activities and serve as ambassadors to the general public.

The Core Advisory Group met 6 times during the planning process. Meetings focused on evaluating potential interchange design alternatives, refining an equitable development approach, and collaboratively charting potential implementation action steps.

- **Interagency Steering Committee:** The Interagency Steering Committee consisted of representatives from key public agencies. The purpose of this group was to:
 - Identify potential problems and provide strategic guidance on key issues and action items;
 - Support proactive coordination across agencies and projects;
 - Ensure alignment between Reconnecting the West End and the ongoing I-77 South Express Lanes project (I-5718);
 - Coordinate external communications; and
 - Promote shared ownership of solutions.

The Interagency Steering Committee met 8 times throughout the life of the project, to establish guardrails for planning and design, emphasize individual agency priorities, and provide input on key recommendations and deliverables.



Public engagement for Reconnecting the West End included a community survey, pop-up meetings at community events, presentations at neighborhood association meetings, a public design charrette, and public meetings.



Community Engagement & Concept Development Process

Developing retrofit/redesign concepts for the West End interchange was an iterative process informed by input from the Interagency Steering Committee, the Core Advisory Group, and the public over the course of roughly 15 months. The project team guided the community engagement and concept development process through key milestones across 5 project phases:

1. Vision & Values

2. Identification of Alternatives

- Interagency Workshop
- Public Design Alternatives Charrette

3. Concept Development & Screening

4. Design Alternatives Refinement

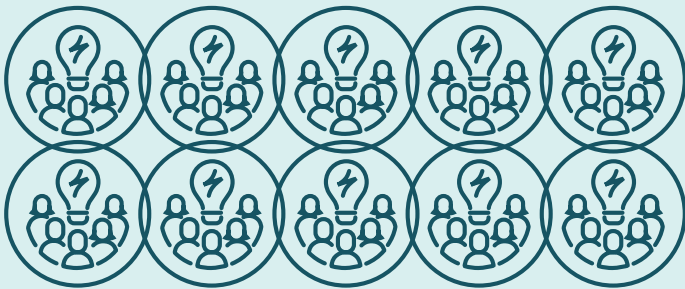
- Ramp Removal Scenarios & Preliminary Traffic Operations Analysis
- Supporting Gold Line Streetcar Operations

5. Selection of A Preferred Alternative & Development of Final Plan

- Evaluation of Design Scenarios
- Final Traffic Operations Analysis
- Design Pin-Ups & Final Plan Review

The pages that follow provide more detail on the purpose and outcomes of key milestones within this process.

The development of the preferred West End interchange alternative was a collaborative public process involving West End residents, businesses, institutions, property owners, and other stakeholders, as well as government agencies like the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and NCDOT.



~10 interchange redesign ideas were discussed at the **Interagency Workshop**

5 interchange rebuild alternatives were selected for further exploration and evaluation through the **Public Design Alternatives Charrette**.

3 new ramp removal scenarios were selected for more detailed evaluation as a result of ongoing **coordination with NCDOT I-77 South Express Lanes project**.

1 preferred West End interchange alternative was confirmed by CDOT, NCDOT, the Interagency Steering Committee, and the Core Advisory Group following a comprehensive evaluation of the interchange design alternatives completed to date.



1. VISION & VALUES

Purpose

During this phase the project team engaged the Interagency Steering Committee and the Core Advisory Group in conversations about their overall vision for reconnecting the West End. In addition to the goals previously established for the project (*see page 9*), both groups discussed their aspirations for the project and described values that they hold for advancing community-centered design solutions.

Key Outcomes:

The Interagency Steering Committee described their vision for the future of the West End interchange area. Key aspirations are summarized below.

- **Community-centered and equitable outcomes:** Build transparency and trust with the community. Set realistic expectations and leave participants feeling positive about their involvement in the engagement process.
- **Multimodal and pedestrian-focused improvements:** Enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and transit experiences between the West End and Uptown. Better integration of the Irwin Creek Greenway / Seam Trail into the West End should be a priority. Manage vehicle speeds on Trade St. and 5th St. to improve pedestrian comfort. Improve access to transit stops.
- **Implementable design solutions:** Find a feasible way to reduce the West End interchange footprint. Prioritize practical and phased improvements. If possible, identify recommendations that do not rely on a full interchange reconstruction.
- **Interagency coordination:** Align with the I-77 South Express Lanes project. Manage evolving challenges through coordination and consider impacts and practical opportunities for implementation.
- **Funding readiness and agency buy-in:** Advance a design and plan that positions the City and NCDOT to pursue further funding for recommended improvements. Support complementary community development goals such as increased affordable housing at Inlivian’s Tarlton Hills site.

The Core Advisory Group developed a statement of values to guide their review and feedback on the concept development. Key values are summarized below.

- **Collaborative Solutions:** The best outcomes for the I-77 corridor in the West End depend on close collaboration between the West End community, the City of Charlotte, NCDOT, and Mecklenburg County leading to alignment on values and project outcomes
- **Essential Connectivity:** Improving pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connectivity in the study area is essential. These connections are the lifeblood of the West End, supporting access to goods, services, amenities, and economic opportunities.
- **Protect The Community from Harm:** Any improvements or changes proposed as a part of Reconnecting the West End should not demolish homes, destroy park land, take school property, or disturb graves.
- **Transparent & Meaningful Public Engagement:** There is a long history of the public being excluded from decisions that shaped this community, going back to the construction of I-77 through the West End in the 1960s. The people of the West End deserve full participation and shared ownership in the design process for the West End interchange area.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF ALTERNATIVES

Purpose

This phase of concept development focused on encouraging creativity in identifying a broad set of potential design solutions. The process was grounded in the values expressed by the community, the technical realities of highway interchange design, and a desire for collaboration among various agencies. There were two key events during this phase of concept development, the **Interagency Workshop** and the **Public Design Alternatives Charrette**.

Interagency Workshop

The Interagency Workshop was a key step in aligning various public agencies around the goals of the Reconnecting the West End project. The primary purpose of the Interagency Workshop was to:

- Encourage shared understanding & ownership of the West End interchange design process, and
- Get preliminary feedback about interchange design ideas to explore in more detail at the public charrette.

Agencies in attendance included:

- NCDOT
 - Highway Division 10
- CDOT
 - Mobility Planning Division
 - Modeling, Analysis, and Design Division
 - Engineering & Operations Division
- Mecklenburg County
 - Park & Recreation
 - Asset & Facility Management
- Charlotte General Services
 - Engineering / Corridors of Opportunity Program
 - Charlotte Planning, Design, and Development
- Urban Design Center
- Long Range Planning

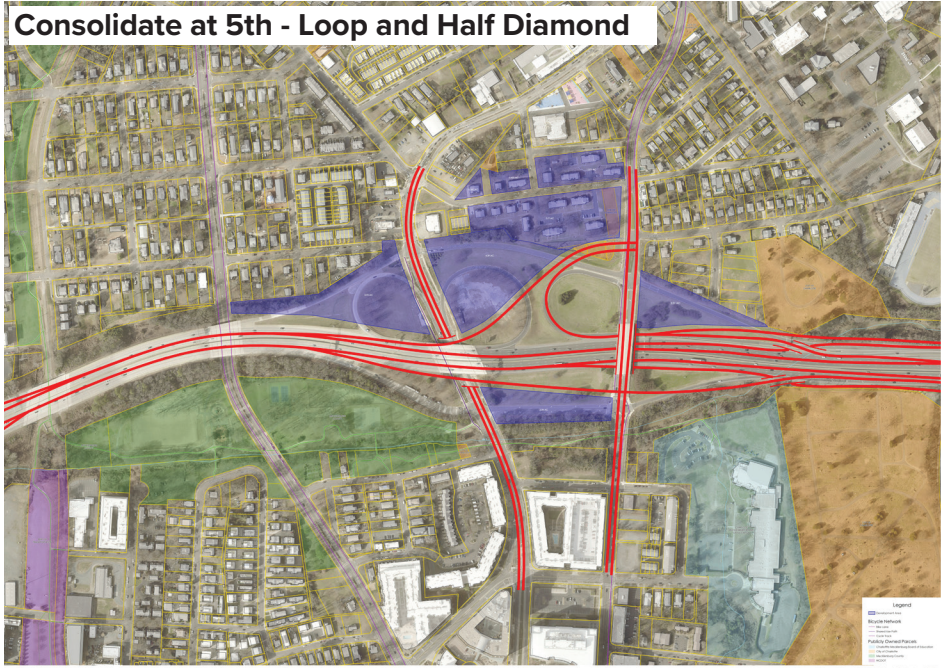
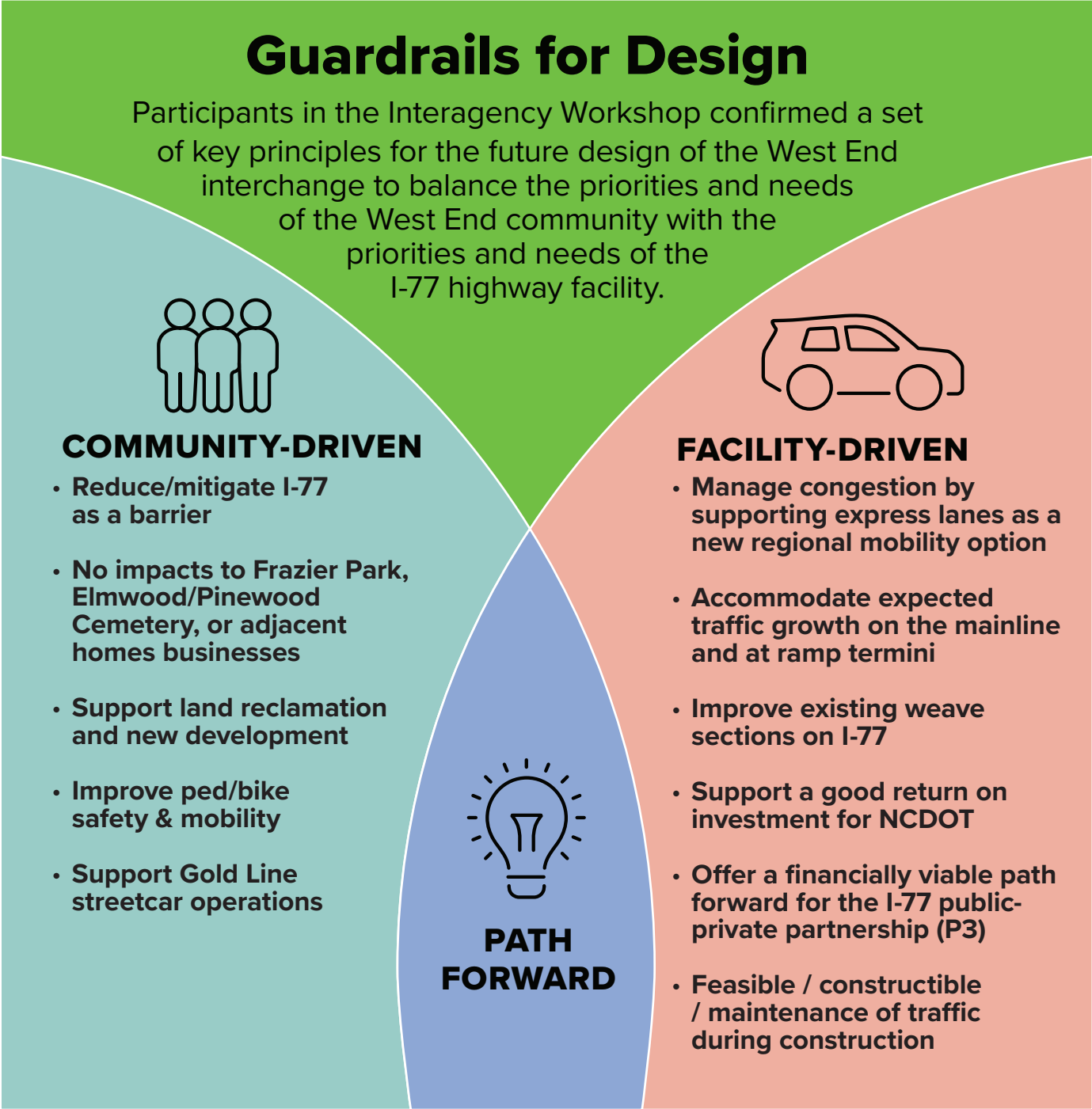
The Interagency Workshop was a full-day, in-person session on March 13, 2025. During the meeting the design team presented approximately 10 unique interchange design concepts, which were developed for the purpose of comparing potential alignment and tradeoffs between the priorities and values of the West End community and the priorities for the I-77 highway facility. The workshop engaged agency participants in a facilitated conversation around the potential benefits, challenges, and feasibility of each concept. The workshop was centered around iterative, live-drawing, concept design exercises that allowed agency participants to offer ideas and respond to feedback in real time. Much of the conversation focused on tradeoffs between key goals like land reclamation, minimizing potential impacts to adjacent properties, and supporting safe and efficient highway operations.

Key Outcomes:

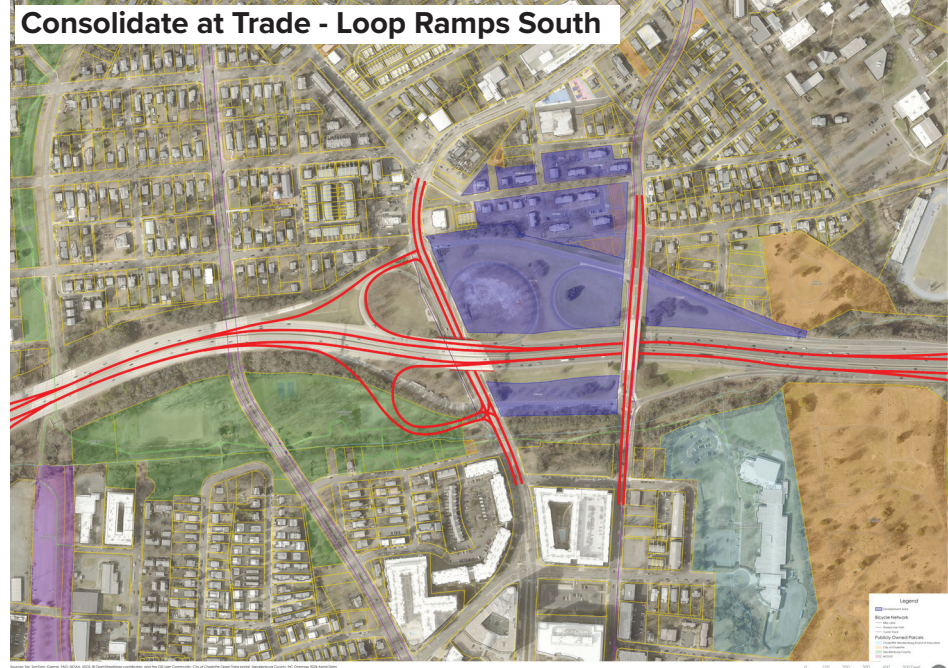
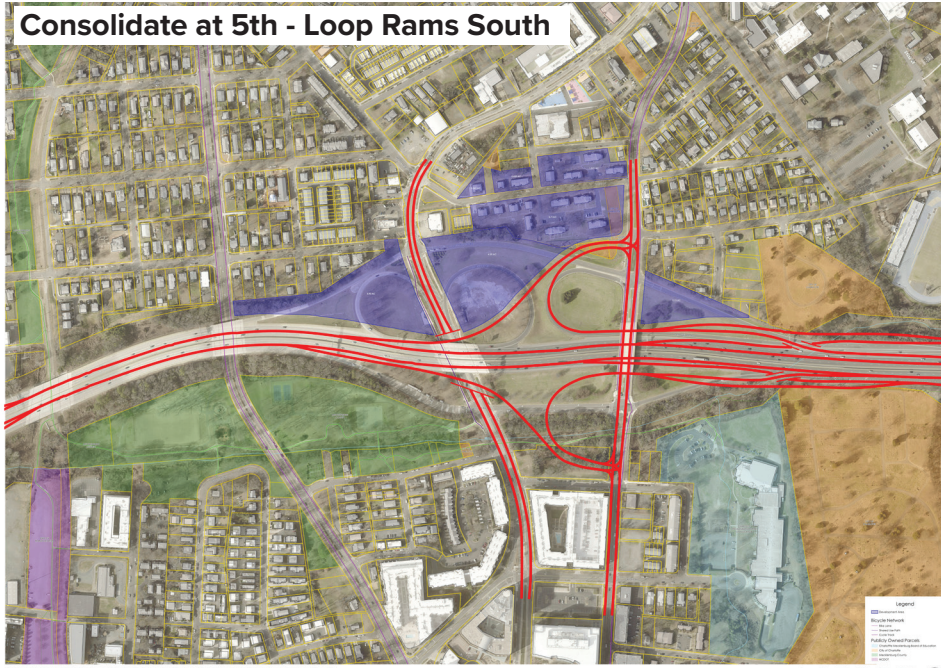
Key outcomes of the Interagency Workshop include:

- Established a working partnership among NCDOT, CDOT, and City/County staff to discuss the merits of various interchange design alternatives for the West End Interchange.
- Identified key design constraints and agency priorities.
- Confirmed technical and policy “Guardrails for Design” to guide future concept refinement. (See graphic on next page).
- Agreed on 5 interchange redesign concepts that provided the greatest potential alignment between the priorities and values of the West End community and the priorities for the I-77 highway facility. These 5 concepts were carried forward for further exploration at the Public Design Alternatives Charrette. (See diagrams on next page).
- Coordination between the Reconnecting the West End project and the I-77 South Express Lanes project, resulting in a greater understanding of how these projects might respond to and influence each other.

2. IDENTIFICATION OF ALTERNATIVES



A key outcome of the Interagency Workshop was identifying 5 interchange redesign concepts to explore in more detail in the next phase of concept development. The diagrams above illustrate the interchange ramp configurations in red and the potential land reclamation and redevelopment areas in blue. Inlivian’s Tarlton Hills affordable housing community is included in the potential redevelopment areas. Inlivian representatives participated in the Core Advisory Group and indicated a desire to explore potential redevelopment of the Tarlton Hills site that would retain and expand the number of affordable housing units on site.



Public Design Alternatives Charrette

The Public Design Alternatives Charrette was a focal point of the public process for the Reconnecting the West End project. The primary purpose of the Public Design Alternatives Charrette was to:

- Evaluate the 5 different interchange retrofit scenarios for the West End interchange;
- Explore land reclamation and redevelopment opportunities within those scenarios;
- Identify opportunities for overcoming the I-77 barrier by improving pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and public space connections between the West End and Uptown;
- Engage key stakeholders, residents, and the general public in reviewing work in progress and providing feedback to the design team in real time;
- Advance work in a publicly accessible, open studio environment to support transparency and build trust for the Reconnecting the West End project process and outcomes.

Attendees included:

- CDOT
 - Mobility Planning Division
 - Modeling, Analysis, and Design Division
 - Engineering & Operations Division
- Mecklenburg County - Park & Recreation
- Charlotte General Services - Engineering / Corridors of Opportunity Program
- Charlotte Planning, Design, and Development - Urban Design Center
- NCDOT - Highway Division 10
- Focus group participants representing the following organizations:
 - DC Howard Consulting
 - Foundation for the Carolinas
 - United Way
 - Atrium Health
 - Educated Hoodlums Brand
 - LISC Charlotte
 - City of Charlotte Economic Development Department / Corridors of Opportunity
 - Johnson C. Smith University
 - 3rd Ward Neighborhood Association
 - Five Points Community Collaborative (5PCC)
 - Urban Trends Collective
 - Charlotte Center City Partners
- Area residents and the general public

The Public Design Alternatives Charrette was a two-day, in-person workshop on March 25-26, 2025. The charrette was both a design workshop and a strategic planning session. It provided space for the design team, neighborhood leaders, residents, and agency representatives to discuss technical constraints, share input, and understand different goals and values.

During the charrette the design team worked in a publicly accessible, open studio environment. This allowed residents, stakeholders, and agency representatives to offer input and explore design ideas in real-time with the project team.



Four Focus Groups were conducted during the charrette to solicit specific feedback from different groups – 1) Neighborhoods/Congregations/CBOs; 2) Property Holders & Developers; 3) Public/Private/Philanthropic Partnerships; and 4) Business, Economic Development & Civic Organizations.

The charrette concluded with a neighborhood celebration and design pin-up on the second evening. Participants enjoyed live music, free food, and lively conversations with the charrette design team about the 5 different interchange retrofit scenarios for the West End interchange.

Summary of Charrette Feedback

• Development Opportunities & Character

- Preserve/expand affordable housing on-site.
- Expand street level retail and achieve a “Main Street feel” between West End and Uptown.
- Create new park/plaza/public spaces as a central organizing element for new development in reclaimed land areas.
- Incorporate mixed-use, higher-intensity, walkable development, but preserve neighborhood character. Dense, tall development along I-77 is ok, but it should step down toward the neighborhoods to respect the existing residential character and context.
- “Dream big” to connect the West End and Uptown. Examples: The Stitch (Atlanta, GA); City Walk (Birmingham, AL); Big Dig (Boston, MA)

• Multimodal Connections

- Protect, enhance, and expand the Irwin Creek Greenway, the Uptown CycleLink, and pedestrian connections.
- Better integrate the Irwin Creek Greenway and the Uptown CycleLink across I-77 into the West End.
- Make sure the streetcar is efficient and easy to walk to.
- Emphasize Montgomery St., Summit Ave., and Frazier Ave. as important corridors within an expanded neighborhood street grid to connect existing and proposed public spaces, transit stops, and pedestrian/bicycle facilities.

• Impacts

- Avoid displacement of existing residents and businesses.
- Do not impact Frazier Park or lose existing park space.
- Do not impact the historic W. Pinewood and Elmwood/Pinewood Cemeteries.
- Avoid disrupting views to Uptown. Make use of the grade change to emphasize and protect views between the West End (especially Five Points) and Uptown.

See *Appendix F: Charrette Concepts* for more details on the 5 interchange retrofit scenarios explored during the charrette, including the design drawings, the “big ideas” for each scenario, and a summary of the pros/cons and high-level tradeoffs for each scenario.

Key Outcomes: Key outcomes of the Public Design Alternatives Charrette include:

- Exploration of long-term possibilities for the redevelopment of the Tarlton Hills affordable housing site that would maintain and expand affordable housing opportunities on-site.
- Exploration of possibilities for reintroducing a connected street grid in reclaimed land area.
- An evaluation of each interchange retrofit scenario (including development redevelopment potential and potential impacts to Frazier Park, W. Pinewood and Elmwood/Pinewood Cemeteries, and adjacent properties).
- An understanding of the pros/cons and high-level tradeoffs between different interchange redesign scenarios.
- Presentation at a Five Points Community Collaborative Town Hall meeting.
- Media coverage and broadcast via WFAE.
- Participation from over 100 community attendees in the charrette process (includes 67 attendees in the Focus Groups, 45 resident attendees at the evening pin-up).
- The development of design drawings for the 5 interchange retrofit scenarios (including an illustrative development/redevelopment plan, a pedestrian/bicycle network diagram, street sections, precedent images from other places, and an eye-level rendering).

3. CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT & SCREENING

Purpose

This phase of engagement and concept development was focused on evaluating and screening the previous design ideas in partnership with NCDOT and other agency stakeholders. Throughout the development and evaluation of the interchange concepts, the Reconnecting the West End project team was in frequent contact with the NCDOT I-77 South Express Lanes Project team. Following the charrette, CDOT, NCDOT, and the design teams for each project engaged in a series of conversations to coordinate their work.

The purpose of that collaboration was to:

- Support a shared sense of ownership and appreciation for how the two efforts might respond to and influence each other;
- Understand the potential design direction for the I-77 South Express Lanes project; and
- Determine the implications for key design decisions and selecting a preferred alternative for the Reconnecting the West End project.

Key Outcomes: Key outcomes of this phase of coordination with the NCDOT I-77 South Express Lanes Project team include:

- An assumption that NCDOT’s future implementation of express lanes would likely not require a complete rebuild of the West End interchange.
- A pivot away from design scenarios that would completely rebuild the interchange in favor of a more measured approach that would simply remove/consolidate redundant freeway ramps.
- Ongoing coordination with NCDOT to encourage the NCDOT I-77 South Express Lanes Project team to seek design solutions that avoid impacts to adjacent properties and key community assets.

4. DESIGN ALTERNATIVES REFINEMENT

Purpose

In this phase of concept development, the project team refined options for the West End interchange focused on removing redundant freeway ramps. During this phase of refinement, the design team began to get a clearer picture of the potential outcomes of the I-77 South Express Lanes project. This gave the team the opportunity to better position Reconnecting the West End recommendations to be feasible and relevant whether or not the express lanes project moves forward.

The purpose of this phase was to:

- Explore ramp removal scenarios that would not have impacts on adjacent properties;
- Analyze the potential future traffic operations of ramp removal scenarios in more detail;
- Refine proposed improvements to Trade St. and 5th St. within the emerging ramp removal alternatives for the West End interchange;
- Study the feasibility of a potential dedicated guideway for the Gold Line Streetcar through the interchange area;
- Complete a comprehensive evaluation of all interchange design scenarios developed to date; and
- Develop recommendations for Reconnecting the West End that are feasible and relevant with or without the latest express lanes concepts.

Ramp Removal Scenarios & Preliminary Traffic Operations Analysis: The design team began by analyzing historical traffic data and projected future traffic data from the traffic forecast developed by NCDOT for the I-77 South Express Lanes project. That allowed the team to identify the West End interchange ramps that carry the least traffic – now and in the future.



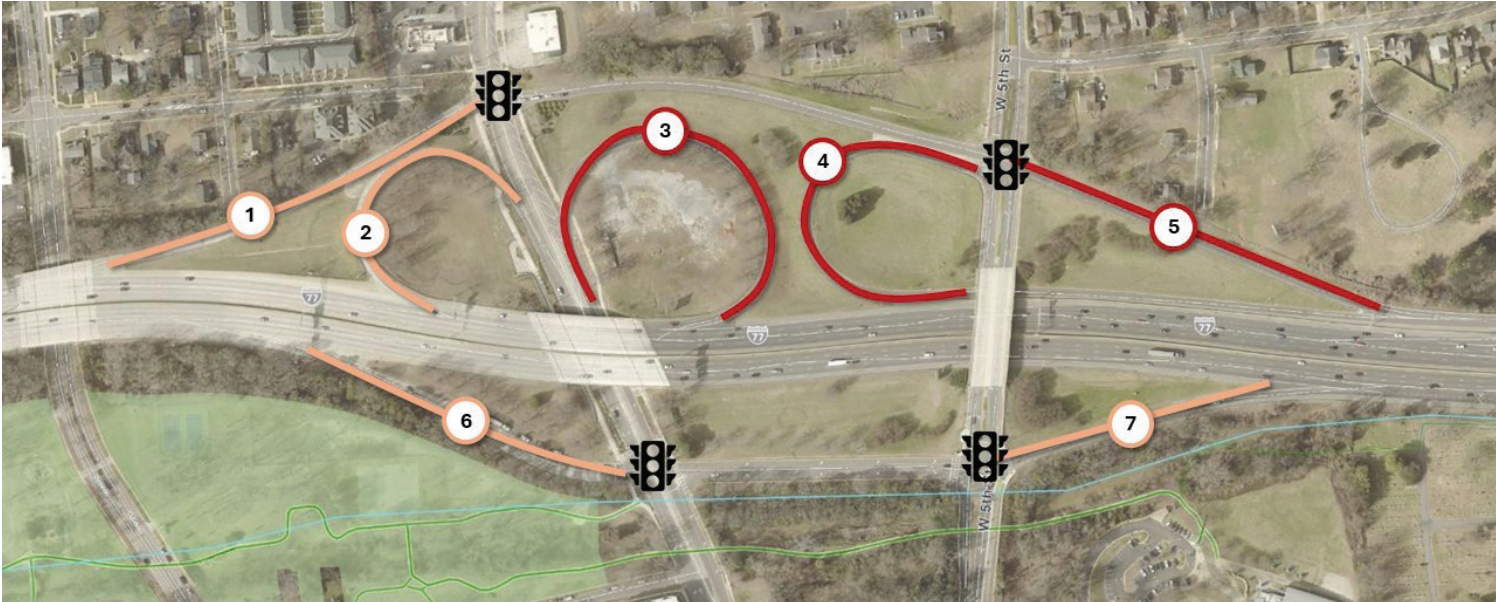
The West End interchange includes seven ramps. For the I-77 southbound direction, several of these ramps are redundant, with five ramps serving two primary movements. (Image: Benjamin Boomers via Google. May 2022.)

Which ramps carry the least traffic today?



The I-77 southbound loop ramps between Trade St. and 5th St. (ramps 3 and 4) are the least used ramps today. The other I-77 southbound off ramps (ramps 2 and 5) also have low traffic volumes relative to typical expectations for urban freeway interchanges.

Which ramps carry the least traffic in the future?



Per NCDOT’s traffic forecast for the I-77 South Express Lanes project, ramps 3, 4, and 5 are projected to carry relatively low traffic volumes in the future compared to the other ramps in the West End interchange.

LOCATION	NCDOT Historical AADT (2004 to 2023)	
	HIGHEST AADT	LOWEST AADT
1. I-77 Southbound On-Ramp from Trade St	6100	3100
2. I-77 Southbound Loop Off-Ramp to Inbound Trade St	3100	2000
3. I-77 Southbound Loop On-Ramp from Outbound Trade St	2300	1300
4. I-77 Southbound Loop Off-Ramp to 5th St	1100	800
5. I-77 Southbound Off-Ramp to 5th St	3100	1600
6. I-77 Northbound Off-Ramp to Trade St	7900	5600
7. I-77 Northbound On-Ramp from 5th St	8900	5200

LOCATION	NCDOT No-Build Traffic Forecast*	
	Base (2022) Volumes	2050 Volumes
1. I-77 Southbound On-Ramp from Trade St	4800	8200
2. I-77 Southbound Loop Off-Ramp to Inbound Trade St	3300	5600
3. I-77 Southbound Loop On-Ramp from Outbound Trade St	2400	4100
4. I-77 Southbound Loop Off-Ramp to 5th St	1200	3900
5. I-77 Southbound Off-Ramp to 5th St	2300	3600
6. I-77 Northbound Off-Ramp to Trade St	8200	13900
7. I-77 Northbound On-Ramp from 5th St	7800	12200

*NCDOT. STIP I-5718 No-Build Traffic Forecast. RS&H. April 8, 2024.

Using this information, the team developed 3 new options for the West End interchange focused on:

- Removing/reconfiguring redundant I-77 ramps;
- Enabling land reclamation and redevelopment opportunities;
- Supporting opportunities for better pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections between the West End and Uptown; and
- Maintaining vehicular access between the I-77 ramp terminals, 5th Street, and Trade Street.

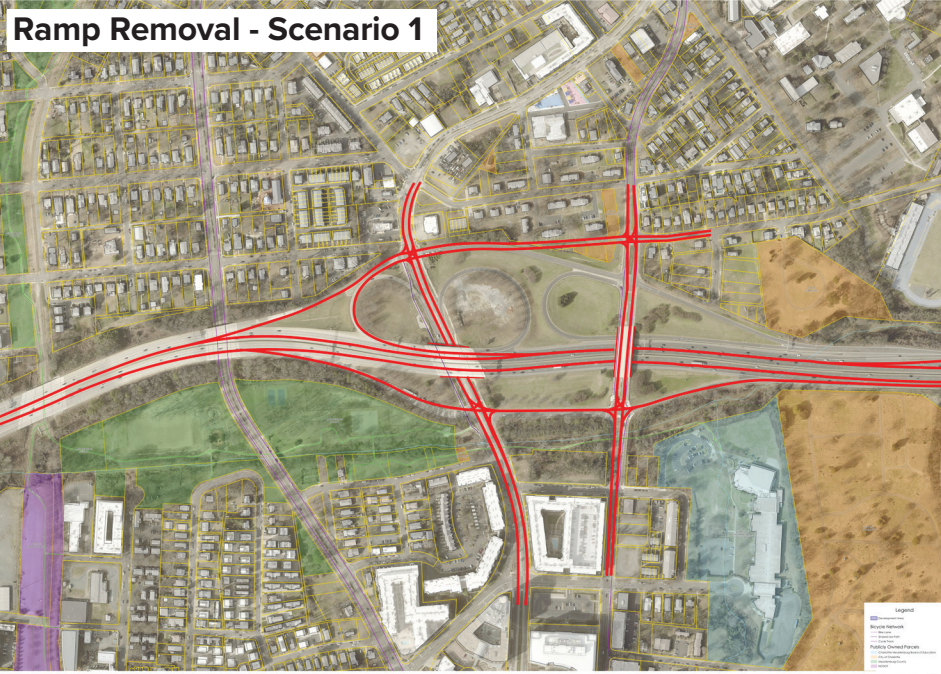
During this phase the team also completed a preliminary traffic analysis to evaluate future traffic operations for the three potential ramp removal scenarios. The team coordinated closely with CDOT and used estimated 2050 traffic volumes from NCDOT’s I-77 South Express Lanes traffic forecast for this exercise.

Key Outcomes

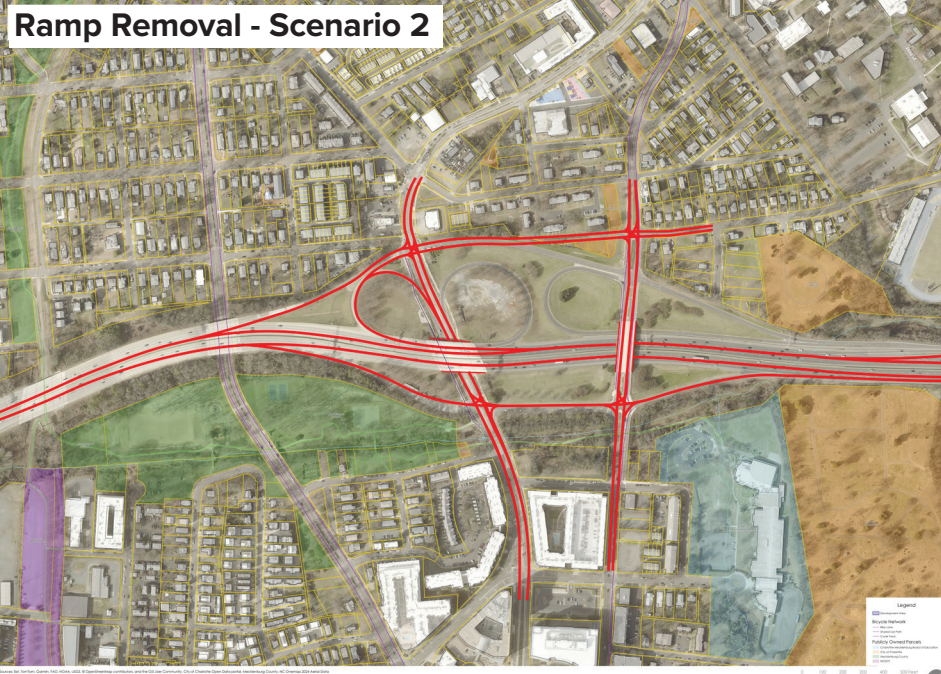
Key outcomes of this concept refinement process include:

- Refinement of previous concepts and an analysis of existing and future traffic operations to create 3 new West End interchange design alternatives focused on the removal of redundant freeway ramps.
- A high-level concept and recommendations for design treatments necessary to achieve a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line streetcar through the West End interchange area.
- Ongoing coordination and collaboration with the Interagency Steering Committee and the Core Advisory Group around the refined design alternatives.

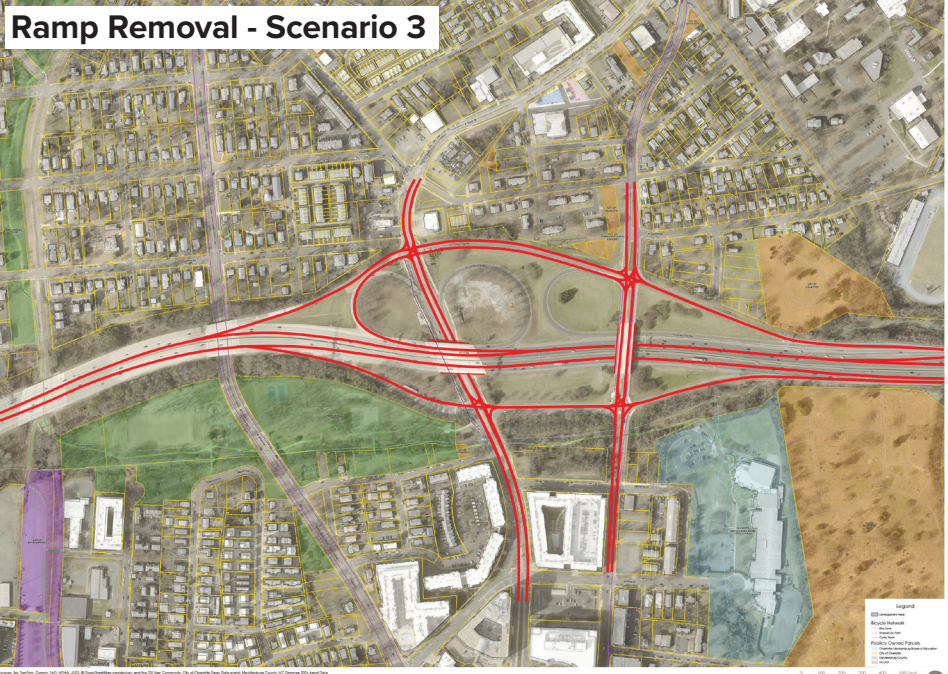
Ramp Removal - Scenario 1



Ramp Removal - Scenario 2



Ramp Removal - Scenario 3



The team completed a traffic analysis to evaluate the traffic operations of the three potential ramp removal scenarios. The team used estimated 2050 traffic volumes from NCDOT’s I-77 South Express Lanes traffic forecast for this exercise. (See Appendix D: Traffic Operations Technical Memo for more details.)

Supporting Gold Line Streetcar Operations

A key part of the concept refinement was a targeted study of a potential dedicated guideway for the Gold Line Streetcar through the interchange area. Supporting safe and efficient Gold Line service is a key part of strengthening connections between the West End and Uptown. While the Gold Line currently operates in shared lanes with cars, many cities transition streetcars to exclusive lanes, known as dedicated guideways, where the conditions warrant that configuration. Dedicated guideways remove cars from streetcar tracks, which allows the streetcar to bypass traffic congestion and improves streetcar operations and service times.

During this phase of concept refinement the design team:

- Studied the application of dedicated guideways in other cities across the country;
- Took field measurements to understand constraints and evaluate the feasibility for creating a dedicated guideway through the West End interchange area;
- Prepared a high-level concept and recommendations for the design treatments needed to effectively transition the Gold Line to a dedicated guideway; and
- Coordinated with CATS and CDOT to vet recommendations and understand key design priorities.



The images above illustrate dedicated guideway design treatments for other streetcar facilities in Detroit, MI; Seattle, WA; Hillsboro, OR; and Cincinnati, OH. The design team studied these precedents, and others, to understand the feasibility of establishing a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line streetcar through the West End interchange area.

5. SELECTION OF A PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE & PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Purpose

The purpose of this phase was to evaluate the remaining West End interchange alternatives, select a preferred alternative to guide the future vision for Reconnecting the West End, and review the final plan with the community.

Evaluation of West End Interchange Scenarios

The team completed a comprehensive evaluation of 8 total design alternatives – the 5 interchange rebuild alternatives explored during the charrette, plus the 3 ramp removal alternatives analyzed in the concept refinement phase. Each alternative was evaluated using 22 criteria across 6 major categories:

- Reducing/Mitigating I-77 as a Barrier
 - Protecting Community & Cultural Resources
 - Pedestrian/Bicyclist Safety & Mobility
- Gold Line Streetcar Safety & Operations
 - Traffic Safety & Operations
 - Feasibility/Constructability

The design criteria were developed based upon 1) the goals established for the project by CDOT, USDOT, NCDOT, in the Reconnecting the West End grant application/award; 2) guardrails for design identified during the Interagency Workshop; and 3) feedback from the Interagency Steering Committee and the Core Advisory Group. The table at right shows a summary of this evaluation. See Appendix E for the detailed Alternatives Evaluation Matrix.

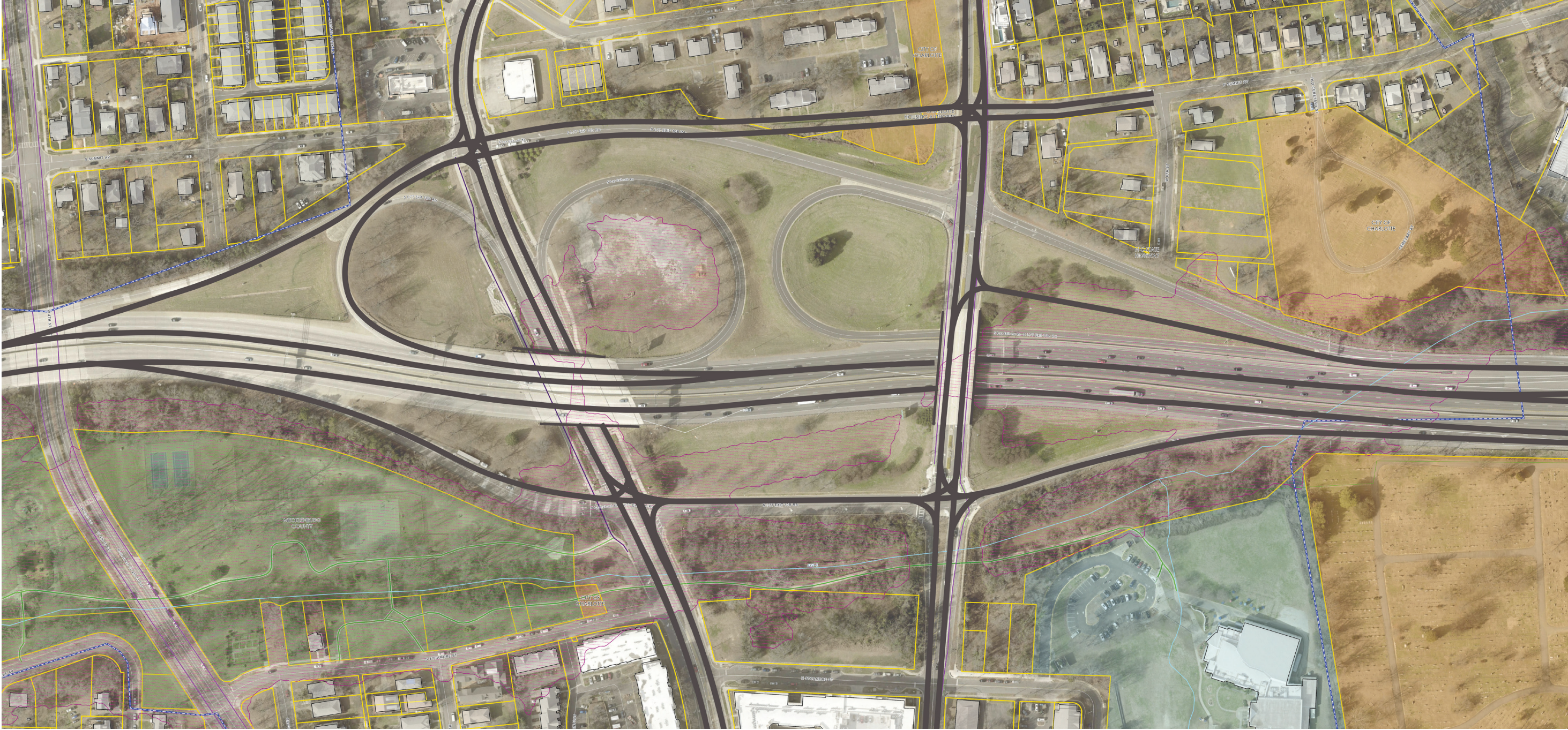
EVALUATION MATRIX SUMMARY TABLE

Interchange Rebuild Scenarios

Criteria:	some expected benefit / some negative impacts	significant concern; more study needed to understand impacts and develop potential mitigations
most expected benefit / least negative impacts	least expected benefit / most negative impacts	more refinement/study required to evaluate

Consolidate at 5th: Loop & Half Diamond 9 high rankings 2 low rankings 1 significant concern (requires more study)	Consolidate at 5th: Loop Ramps South 8 high rankings 5 low rankings 1 significant concern (requires more study)	Consolidate at Trade: Loop Ramps South 11 high rankings 3 low rankings 1 significant concern (requires more study)
Trade and 5th: Offset Loops 3 high rankings 1 low ranking 2 significant concerns (requires more study)	Trade and 5th: Split Diamond 5 high rankings 3 low rankings 2 significant concerns (requires more study)	
Ramp Removal Scenarios Scenario 1: Remove I-77 SB Redundant Ramps 14 high rankings 1 low ranking 0 significant concerns Scenario 2: Maintain Free-Flow Right to from I-77 SB Off-Ramp to Inbound Trade 13 high rankings 1 low ranking 0 significant concerns Scenario 3: Maintain I-77 SB Off-Ramp to 5th 11 high rankings 2 low rankings 0 significant concerns		

Preferred Alternative for the West End Interchange



The preferred alternative was selected and confirmed after:

- Thoughtful conversation and feedback from CDOT, NCDOT, the Interagency Steering Committee, the Core Advisory Group, other project partners, and the public;
- A comprehensive evaluation of design criteria based upon the Reconnecting the West End project goals; and
- Iterative traffic modeling / scenario testing, based on assumptions for future (2050) traffic volumes.

Final Traffic Operations Analysis

In this phase of the concept development, a more detailed traffic operations analysis (using TransModeler traffic simulation software) was also completed to confirm the feasibility of the preferred alternative. The design team developed a traffic model and simulation to test the future traffic operations of the proposed interchange modifications. That exercise confirmed that the proposed interchange configuration can effectively accommodate estimated 2050 traffic volumes within an acceptable overall level of service and delay. (See Appendix D: Traffic Operations Analysis Technical Memo for more details.)

Proposed Development Plans

Once a preferred alternative for the West End interchange was selected, the design team conducted a two-day design workshop to refine multimodal infrastructure and development recommendations within the overall site plan. The workshop started with a walking tour of the site and included a closer examination of greenway connections and bridge/underpass crossings of I-77. The Interagency Steering Committee and Core Advisory Group participated during the workshop to provide real time feedback.

Design Pin-Ups & Final Plan Review

As a final step in building informed consensus for the recommended design solutions, the project team held a series of pin-ups to present the plan recommendations to the Interagency Steering Committee, the Core Advisory Group, and the general public. The team also held meetings with these groups to review the final plan content and recommendations.



In this final phase of developing the shared vision for Reconnecting the West End, the team held another collaborative design workshop with the Steering Committee and Core Advisory Group. After refining the draft recommendations, the project team hosted pin-ups to receive feedback from the Steering Committee, the Core Advisory Group, and the general public. This feedback was used to finalize the recommendations for Reconnecting the West End that are presented in the next chapter.

Key Outcomes

Key outcomes from this phase of engagement and concept development include:

- Selection of a preferred design alternative and confirmation of informed consensus from the Interagency Steering Committee, Core Advisory Group, and the public.
- Important refinements from the Interagency Steering Committee on proposed shared use path / greenway improvements, potential future development in reclaimed land area, and the proposed new county park.
- Confirmation from the traffic operations analysis that the preferred interchange configuration will effectively accommodate future traffic.
- Confirmation of the preferred alternative from the Core Advisory Group, with an emphasis on highlighting the influence of the Five Points Forward Plan in shaping the community-centered development recommendations.
- Confirmation of key plan recommendations from residents at the public pin-up, with an emphasis on preserving affordable housing, providing pedestrian and bicycle connections that are physically separated from traffic, providing housing and services for seniors, maximizing space for new parks and greenways, and considering the use of roundabouts.

The following chapter describes the preferred West End interchange alternative in depth, focusing on the multimodal connections, land use recommendations, and civic space opportunities that will help reconnect the West End and Uptown.



Reconnecting The West End: Our Shared Vision

Our shared vision for reconnecting the West End is to overcome the barrier of I-77 by **restoring and enhancing connectivity** for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users, **removing unnecessary freeway ramps**, **redesigning Trade St. and Fifth Street**, and **reclaiming space** for parks, greenways, and community-focused development.

OVERVIEW

The plan for reconnecting the West End represents a shared vision that reflects the input of West End residents, West End businesses, West End institutions/ organizations, and various agency stakeholders. The process for developing this shared vision was community-centered and collaborative, relying on input from a diverse group of stakeholders and organizations, including:

- Over 100 West End residents;
- Charlotte DOT;
- NCDOT;
- Charlotte Planning, Design and Development;
- Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation;
- CATS;
- CRTPO;
- Charlotte Economic Development;
- Johnson C. Smith University;
- Inlivian;
- The Charlotte Knight Foundation;
- Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC);
- Five Points Community Collaborative; and
- Historic West End Partners.

The shared vision for reconnecting the West End was established after developing over a dozen design scenarios, evaluating concepts across 22 unique criteria, and refining leading concepts in collaboration with West End residents and agency partners. This shared vision is illustrated in the diagram on the following page. This chapter highlights important details for repairing past harm by strengthening multimodal connections, reclaiming land for community-centered development, and creating a new park and greenway connections for West End residents.



Supporting Shared Goals

The purpose of USDOT’s Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program is to help repair the harm caused by infrastructure choices of the past⁸. The shared vision for Reconnecting the West End achieves the goals that the City of Charlotte, NCDOT, USDOT, and their partners originally established for the project through the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program.

PROJECT GOAL	OUR SHARED VISION
Reconnect: Retrofit or mitigate I-77 facility to reconnect the West End to Uptown.	The vision for reconnecting the West End is centered on improvements that will help overcome the I-77 barrier between the West End and Uptown. The vision includes pedestrian and bicycle improvements on Trade Street and 5th Street, improvements to the Gold Line streetcar, and new Irwin Creek Greenway connections.
Reprioritize: Meet demand while also prioritizing the safe and comfortable movement of people.	The proposed street network and multimodal improvements prioritize the safety and comfort of people walking, biking, and riding transit. The proposed street network and I-77 ramp configuration was found to accommodate NCDOT’s 2050 traffic forecast better than the existing configuration and at an acceptable level of traffic operations/delay.
Reclaim: Reclaim land from the interchange area to better connect the West End to adjacent communities.	The proposed vision would reclaim roughly 10 acres of land from the West End interchange. This provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity for new community-centered development, new park space, and new connections to help repair past harm from the construction of I-77.
Recalibrate: Understand future demand and design currently under evaluation through I-77 South Express Lanes project.	The vision for reconnecting the West End was calibrated, to the extent possible, to align with evolving plans for the NCDOT I-77 South Express Lanes project. The improvements proposed in this plan are feasible with ⁹ or without the I-77 South Express Lanes project.
Redevelop: Develop plans & policies to support mixed-income, mixed-use development.	The proposed land use mix includes a significant expansion of the affordable housing units currently on the site, from 50 units to roughly 600. These units are thoughtfully integrated within a mixed-income, mixed-use development plan that includes community-centered retail uses. Advancing the development vision through a public-private partnership with participation from key landowners and stakeholders (e.g., Inlivian, JCSU, City of Charlotte, NCDOT, and Mecklenburg County) will be key.
Redesign: Deliver 10% engineering plans for a West End interchange that accomplishes the above.	The engineering plans provide the City with a comprehensive vision for infrastructure improvements in the study area, while the implementation plan offers a pathway for incremental progress through individual projects.

⁸ USDOT. Reconnecting Communities & Neighborhoods. 2024. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fe16ad992fc949e5b3d9f8d56659f9db>

⁹ Assumes the Express Lanes project follows NCDOT’s most recent proposal (published in Nov. 2025) for elevating new express lanes above the I-77 mainline through the study area. An at-grade widening of I-77 to accommodate new express lanes would not be compatible with the goals of the Reconnecting the West End project.

Responding to Resident Input

The shared vision for reconnecting the West End lifts up and responds to the generous and thoughtful input of West End residents¹⁰, summarized below.

- Provide opportunities to celebrate the rich history, culture, and diversity of the West End.
- Protect & enhance existing pedestrian and bicycle connections across I-77.
 - 69% of survey respondents agreed that I-77 is a barrier for walking between the West End and Uptown.
 - 86% of survey respondents would like to walk more between the West End and Uptown.
- Extend the Irwin Creek Greenway & Uptown CycleLink into the West End.
 - 63% of survey respondents agreed that the West End needs more greenways and trail connections.
- Avoid displacement and preserve/expand affordable housing.
 - 73% of survey respondents agreed that the West End needs more affordable housing options.
- Protect existing neighborhood assets and adjacent properties.
- Do not impact adjacent properties, especially Frazier Park and the cemeteries.
- Create new park and plaza spaces as a focal point for new development.
- Make sure the streetcar is efficient and easy to walk to.
- Incorporate street level retail and a “Main Street feel” between West End and Uptown.
- Incorporate mixed-use, higher-intensity, walkable development but preserve neighborhood character
- Accommodate taller, more dense development along I-77, stepping down to the adjacent neighborhoods.
- Avoid disrupting views to Uptown.
- “Dream big” to connect the West End and Uptown.

“ The West End is one of the most important communities in Charlotte. The residents embody all of the best of Charlotte’s past, present, and future. ...I am proud to be part of the rich heritage that the West side represents. ” – West End Resident¹¹

¹⁰ Summary of resident input from the community engagement process which included various stakeholder meetings, focus groups, the public design alternatives charrette, public design pin-up, and the Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. Quotations and statistics in this list are from the Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. City of Charlotte. May 2025.

¹¹ Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. City of Charlotte. May 2025.

Our Shared Vision

The illustration at right illustrates a community-centered development plan that aligns with the goals for Reconnecting the West End. This is just one potential future development scenario. Although other scenarios are possible, they should be aligned with the “big ideas” described on the following page and the project goals. The final development/redevelopment plan should be established in partnership between West End residents, the City of Charlotte, Inlivan, JCSU, Mecklenburg County Park & Rec, NCDOT, and a private development partner.

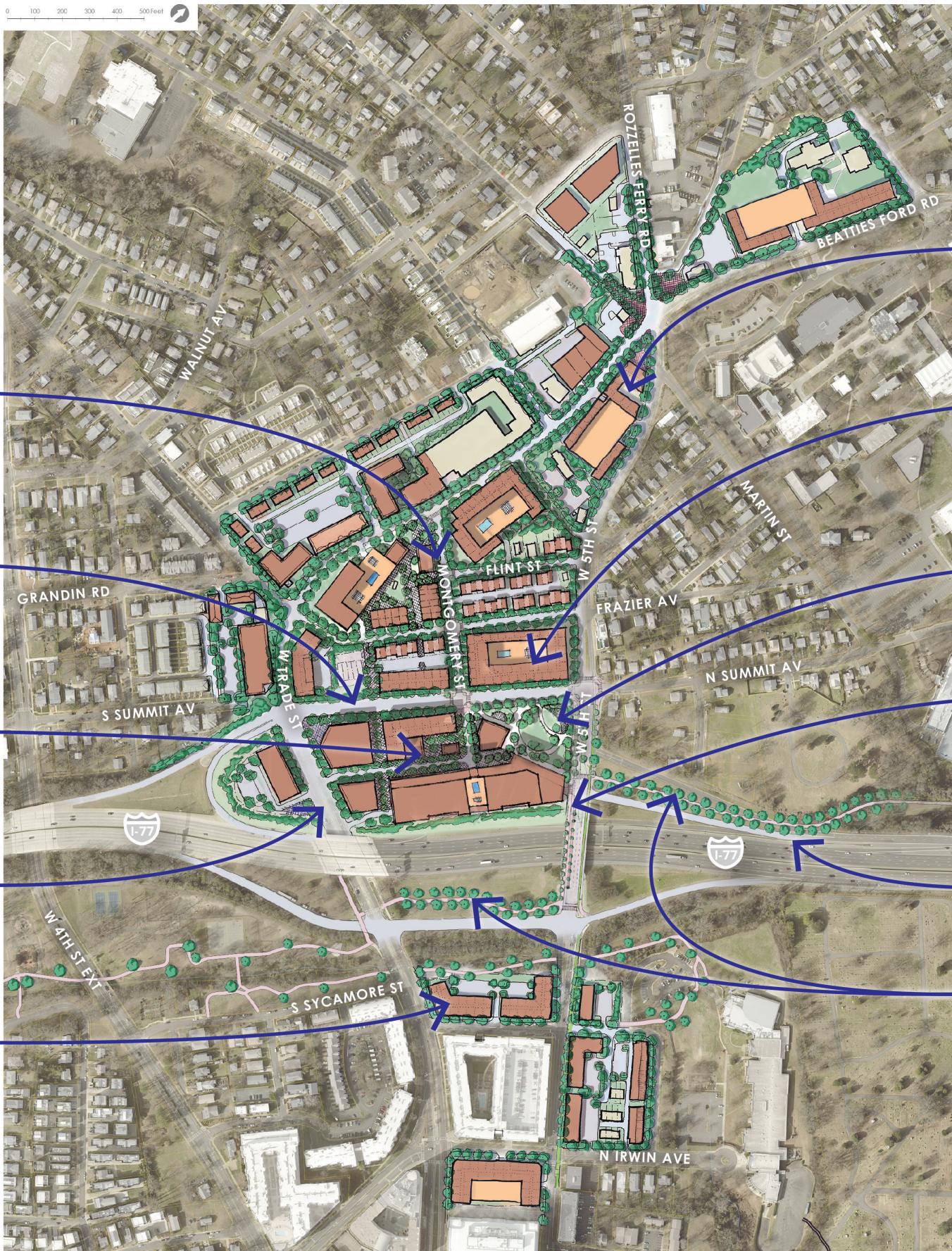
Extend Montgomery St. as a new “Main Street” through the development area

Create a new two-way extension of Summit Ave. between 5th St. & Trade St.

Remove the redundant I-77 southbound loop ramps between Trade St. & 5th St.

Establish a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line through the interchange area

Strategic infill development on peripheral sites



Reflect the development character and ideas recommended by the community in the Five Points Forward Plan

Mixed-income, mixed-use development that increases the total number of affordable units on site

New public park at the intersection of 5th St. and the Summit Ave.

Reallocate space on 5th St. to create a linear park and greenway connector between the West End and Uptown

Shift the I-77 southbound off-ramp to 5th St.

Extend Irwin Creek greenway into the West End & McCrorey Heights

West End Interchange Reconfiguration

- Remove or shift the least used and least important freeway ramps
- No impacts to adjacent properties

Big Ideas

Outcomes

Metrics

- Supports significant land reclamation
- Creates space for the planned extension of Irwin Creek Greenway
- Supports future travel demand

- ~12 ac of land reclaimed for community-centered redevelopment and public use

Multimodal Connections

- Create a new two-way extension of Summit Ave. between 5th St. & Trade St.
- Create a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line through the interchange area
- Improve multimodal safety at intersections

- Improves neighborhood connectivity
- Restores some of the street grid removed by the construction of I-77 in the 1960s
- Improves service times and reliability for Gold Line

- 3,600 LF of new separated bikeways / shared use paths
- 2,200 LF of dedicated guideway for the Gold Line
- 2,000 LF of new street network
- 7 intersections with safety and accessibility improvements

Parks & Greenways

- Create a new public park
- Reallocate space on 5th St. to create a linear park between the West End and Uptown
- Extend the Irwin Creek Greenway

- Provides new park space for West End and Uptown residents
- Restores some of the land taken by I-77 in the 1960s for community use
- Supports recreation and active transportation connections between the West End and Uptown

- 1.5 ac (or more) public park
- 3 ac of new plazas/squares/ public space
- 3,400 LF of new greenways

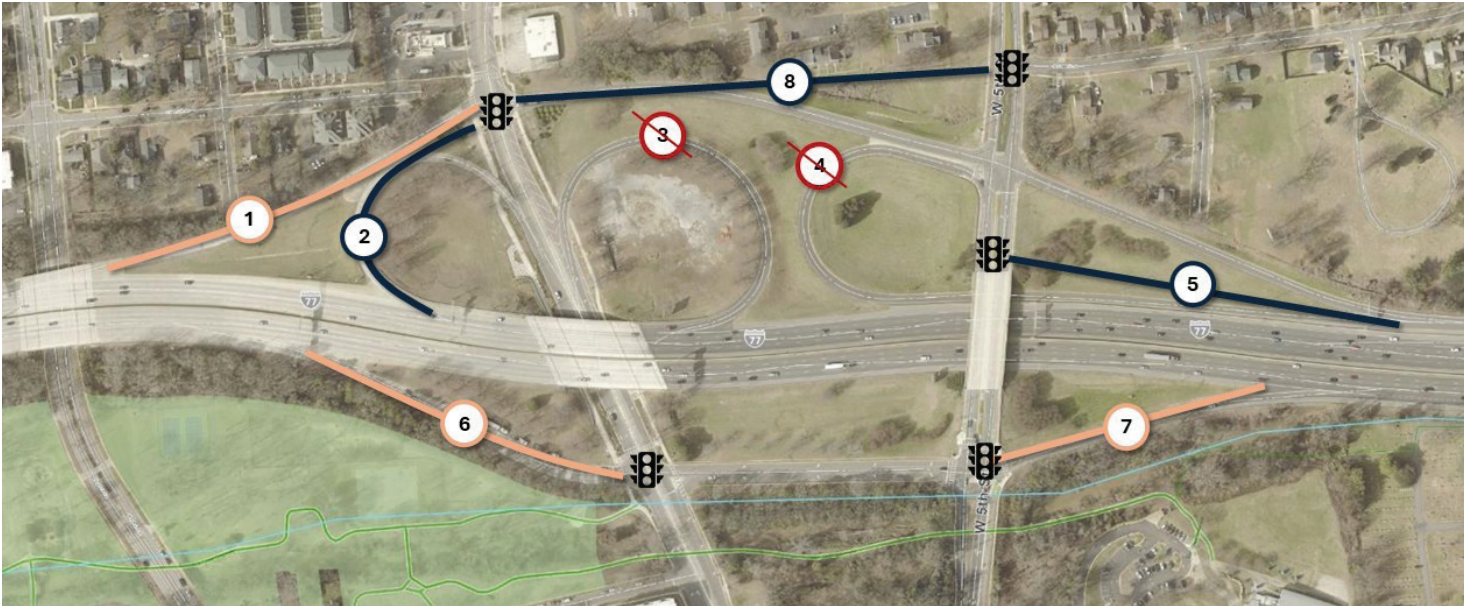
Community-Centered Development

- Advance mixed-use, mixed-income development
- Create space for community-centered retail uses
- Concentrate development intensity and structured parking along I-77
- Reflect the development character and ideas recommended by the community the Five Points Forward Plan

- Accommodates dense development while being sensitive to existing neighborhoods
- Significantly increases the number of affordable units on site (60% AMI and below)
- Utilizes Montgomery St. as a new Main St. connecting Trade St. to the new development area
- Redevelopment of Tarlton Hills is phased to allow existing residents to remain on-site
- Incorporates neighborhood-serving uses requested by residents

- ~6M sq. ft. of new community centered development
- 200,000 sq. ft. of new space for JCSU and community partners
- ~600 new affordable housing units
- ~1,900 new market-rate housing units
- \$42M/year of new retail activity
- \$4M- \$6M/year in new property tax revenue

West End Interchange Reconfiguration



- The recommendations for reconfiguring the West End interchange are focused on:
- Supporting opportunities for better pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections between the West End and Uptown;
 - Enabling land reclamation and community-centered redevelopment opportunities; and
 - Maintaining vehicular access between the I-77, 5th Street, and Trade Street.

The recommended improvements to the West End interchange support the project goals, align with the values expressed by the community, and were found to effectively accommodate estimated 2050 traffic volumes within an acceptable overall level of service and delay.

(See Appendix D: Traffic Operations Analysis Technical Memo for more details.)

1. I-77 Southbound On-Ramp from Trade St.	No Change
2. I-77 Southbound Loop Off-Ramp to Inbound Trade St.	Reconfigure to eliminate free-flow, channelized, right turn conflict across Trade St. shared use path
3. I-77 Southbound Loop On-Ramp from Outbound Trade St.	Remove to support land reclamation and community-centered redevelopment; Also improves short weave section on I-77 southbound to/from Trade St.
4. I-77 Southbound Loop Off-Ramp to 5th St.	Remove to support land reclamation and community-centered redevelopment
5. I-77 Southbound Off-Ramp to 5th St.	Reconfigure to support planned extension of Irwin Creek Greenway and achieve better traffic signal spacing on 5th St.
6. I-77 Northbound Off-Ramp to Trade St.	No Change
7. I-77 Northbound On-Ramp from 5th St.	No Change
8. Summit Ave.	Extend to create new two-way connection between Trade St. & 5th St; Restores some of the street grid removed by the construction of I-77 in the 1960s

MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS

Existing Conditions

The West End interchange area offers several transportation options including the Gold Line streetcar, the Irwin/Stewart Creek greenway system, the Uptown CycleLink, multiple bus routes, and an extensive sidewalk network. However, connections between these critical assets are incomplete and interrupted by I-77.

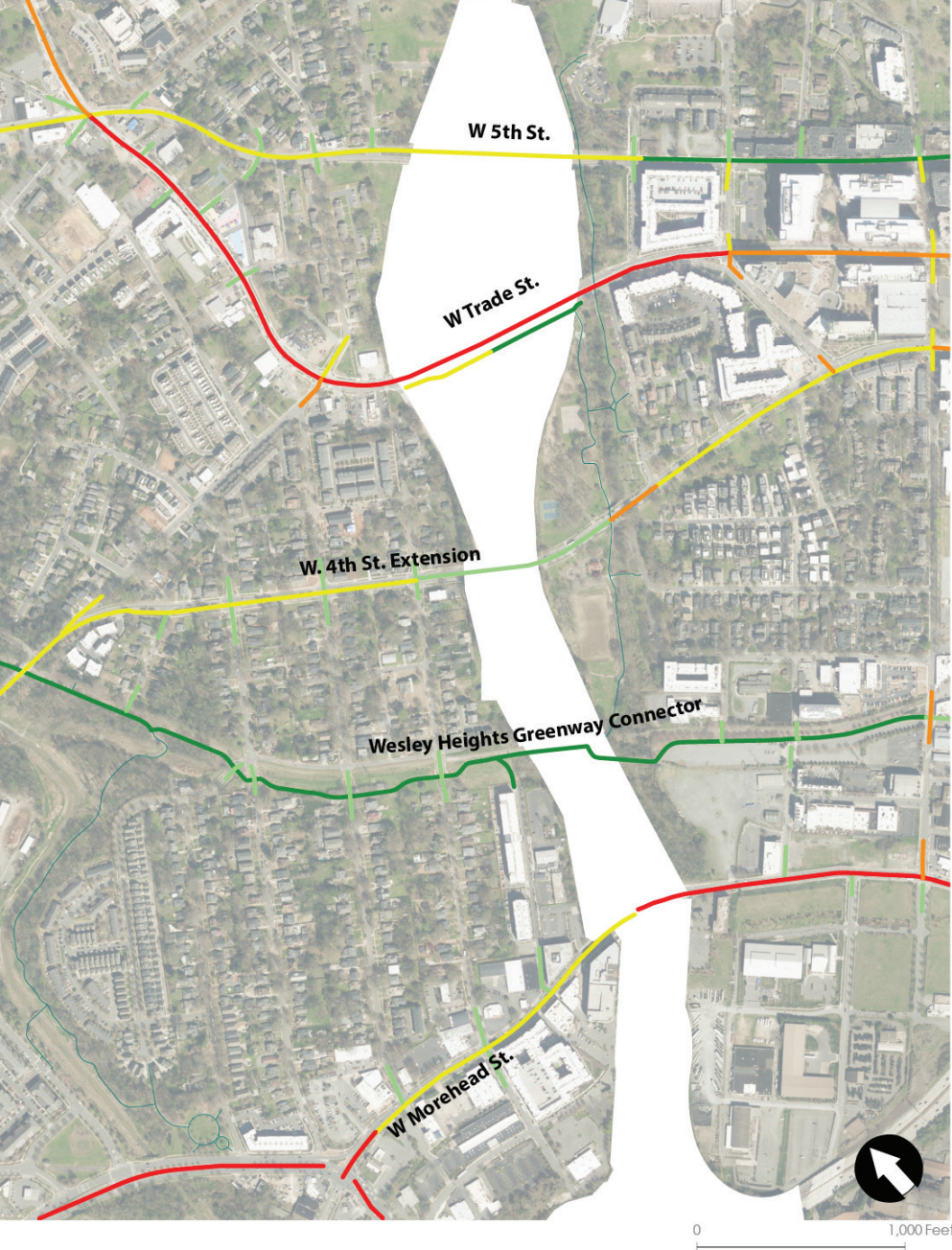
I-77 is a barrier, real and perceived, for people walking, biking, and riding transit between the West End and Uptown. In the two miles between the I-277 Brookshire and Belk interchanges, there are only five ways to walk or bike across I-77. With limited opportunities to get across I-77, an interrupted street network, substandard sidewalks, and a lack of comfortable bicycle facilities, improving multimodal connections is the first goal for reconnecting the West End to Uptown.

The shared vision for reconnecting the West End is focused on enhancing existing multimodal connections and restoring connections that were severed when I-77 was originally constructed.

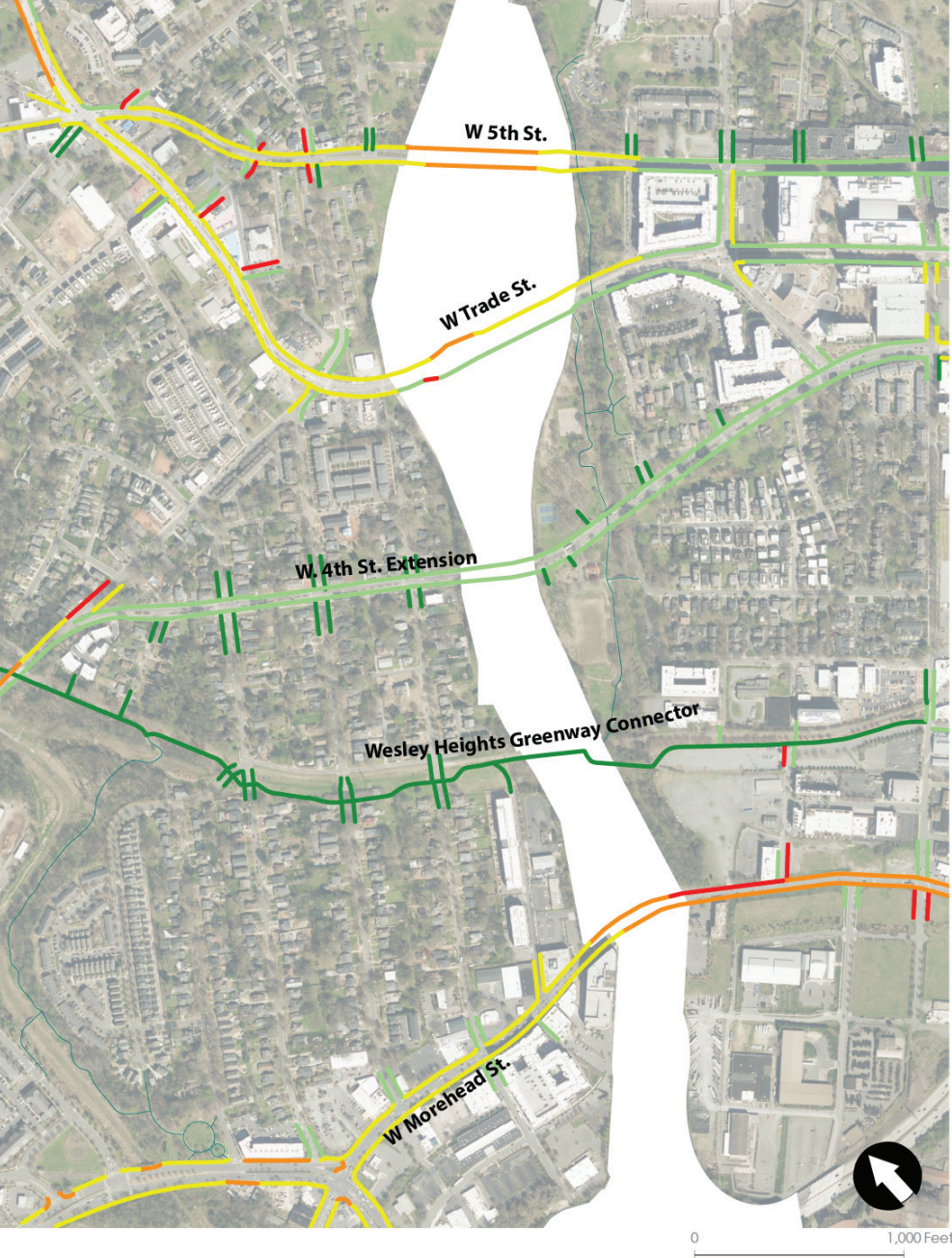
The Pedestrian and Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) analysis maps illustrate the degree of stress people experience when walking and biking along the limited connections across I-77. The methodology for analyzing pedestrian and bicyclist level of traffic stress is based on attributes that influence the perceived stress a person experiences when walking or biking on a given facility, like traffic speed, number of lanes, and separation from traffic.¹² Dark green lines (LTS 1) illustrate the most comfortable walking and biking conditions. Red lines (LTS 5) illustrate the most stressful conditions. The various levels of traffic stress correspond to people’s perception of safety and their likelihood to walk or bike between destinations.

¹² This approach for evaluating the quality of a ped/bike facility based on stress factors is outlined in national resources like the Highway Capacity Manual Pedestrian Level of Service Framework (Transportation Research Board. 2022), the Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress Report (Center for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety. 2024), the Low Stress Bicycling and Network Connectivity report (Mineta Transportation Institute 2012, v2.2 updated by Peter Furth in 2022), and stress factors documented in the Designing for All Ages and Abilities guide (NACTO. 2017). These methodologies were calibrated to the Charlotte context through a field review of the evaluated corridors.

Bicyclist Level of Traffic Stress Analysis



Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress Analysis



Multimodal Network Plan

The reconfigured West End interchange provides an opportunity for key multimodal improvements that will reconnect the West End to Uptown. The diagram at right illustrates the future pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections that will support the safe and comfortable movement of people across the I-77 barrier.

Key recommendations for Reconnecting the West End are summarized below (See the following pages for more details.)

- **5th Street:** Reallocate space on the 5th St. bridge to create a linear park and greenway connector on the south side of the bridge.
- **Trade Street / Gold Line Dedicated Guideway:** Reconfigure Trade St. to establish a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line through the interchange area, improving streetcar reliability and service times.
- **Summit Avenue Extension:** Restore some of the street grid removed by the construction of I-77 and include raised two-way cycle track and wide sidewalks.
- **Montgomery Street:** Utilize Montgomery St. as a new Main St. connecting Trade St. and new development.
- **Intersection Improvements:** Improve ped/bike safety and connections at intersections throughout study area.

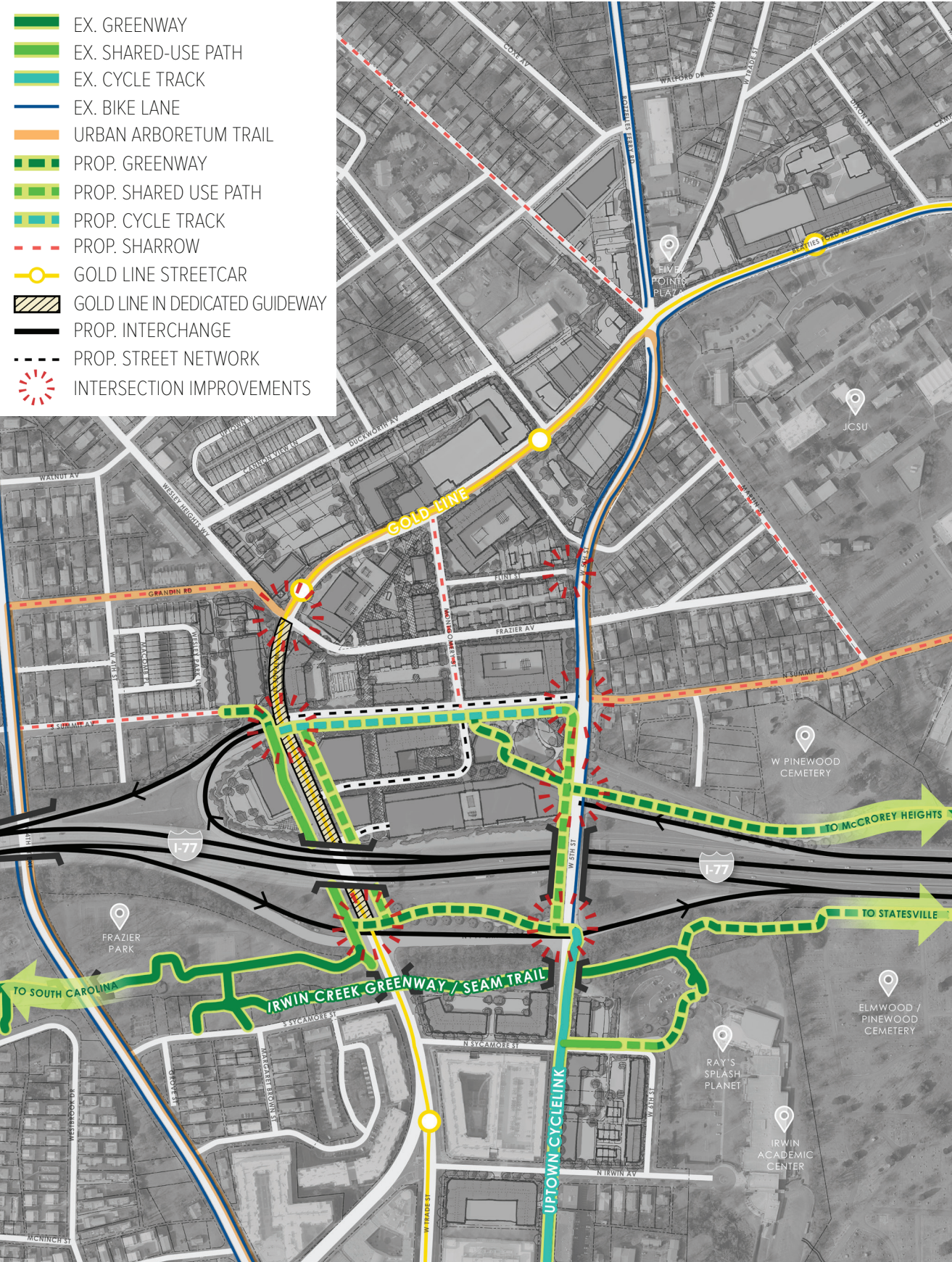
The recommended improvements to the West End interchange support the project goals, align with the values expressed by the community, and were found to effectively accommodate estimated 2050 traffic volumes within an acceptable overall level of service and delay.

“ The West End could be a walkable neighborhood, with everything Uptown and everything the neighborhood has to offer within blocks of each other, if the infrastructure is offered and maintained.” – West End Resident¹³

¹³ Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. City of Charlotte. May 2025.

Multimodal Network Plan

- EX. GREENWAY
- EX. SHARED-USE PATH
- EX. CYCLE TRACK
- EX. BIKE LANE
- URBAN ARBORETUM TRAIL
- PROP. GREENWAY
- PROP. SHARED USE PATH
- PROP. CYCLE TRACK
- PROP. SHARROW
- GOLD LINE STREETCAR
- GOLD LINE IN DEDICATED GUIDEWAY
- PROP. INTERCHANGE
- PROP. STREET NETWORK
- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS



5th Street at Summit Avenue - looking southeast toward Uptown: Improved multimodal connections on 5th St. include separated bike lanes, improved sidewalks, and a reallocation of space on the 5th St. bridge over I-77 to create a new linear park and Irwin Creek Greenway connector.

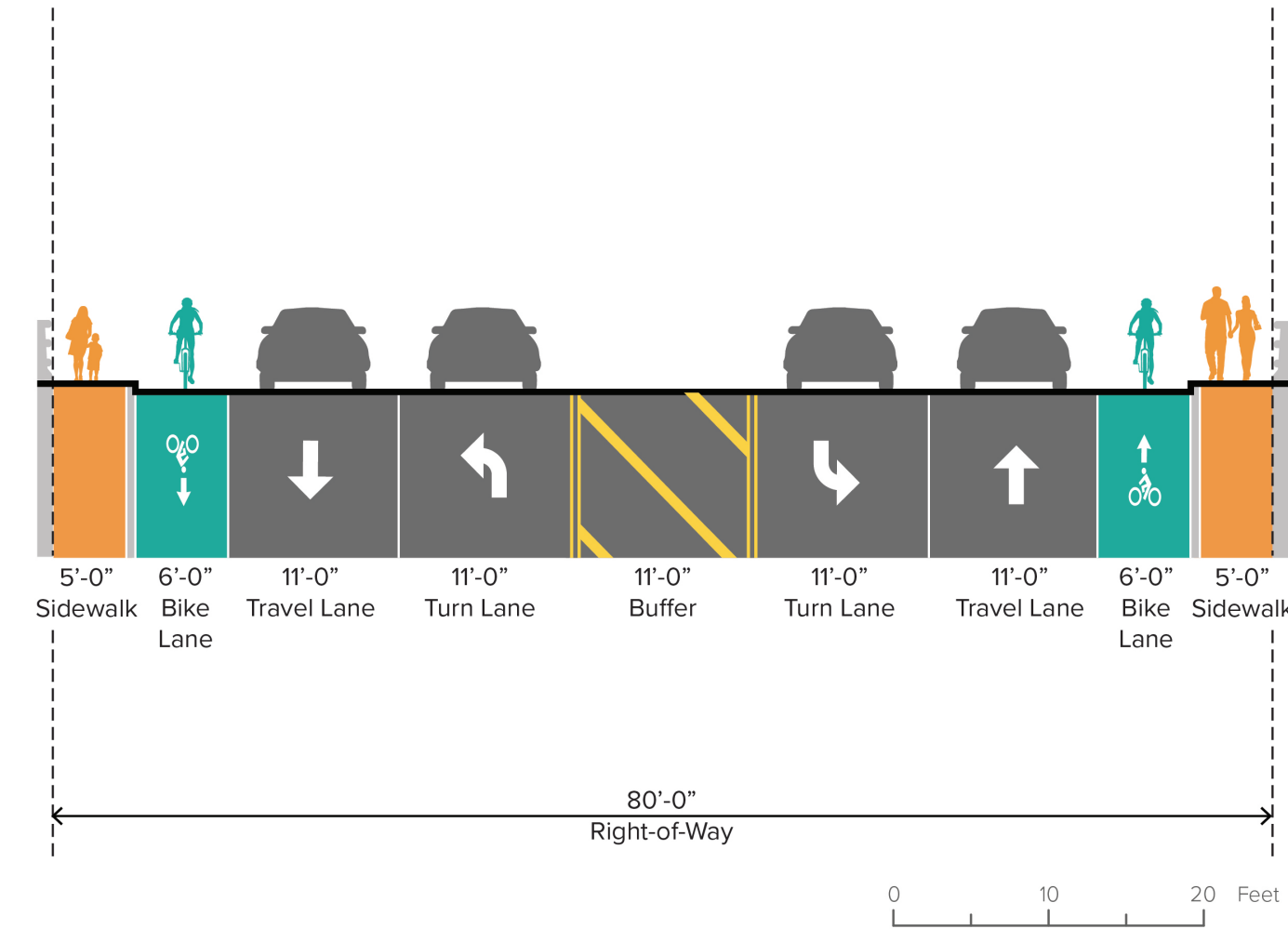


5th Street

A key part of the vision for reconnecting the West End is improving the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on the 5th Street bridge over I-77. 5th Street is a critical corridor, offering connections to the Uptown CycleLink, Five Points, and the planned extension of the Irwin Creek Greenway to JCSU, Biddleville Park, and McCrorey Heights.

• Current Condition:

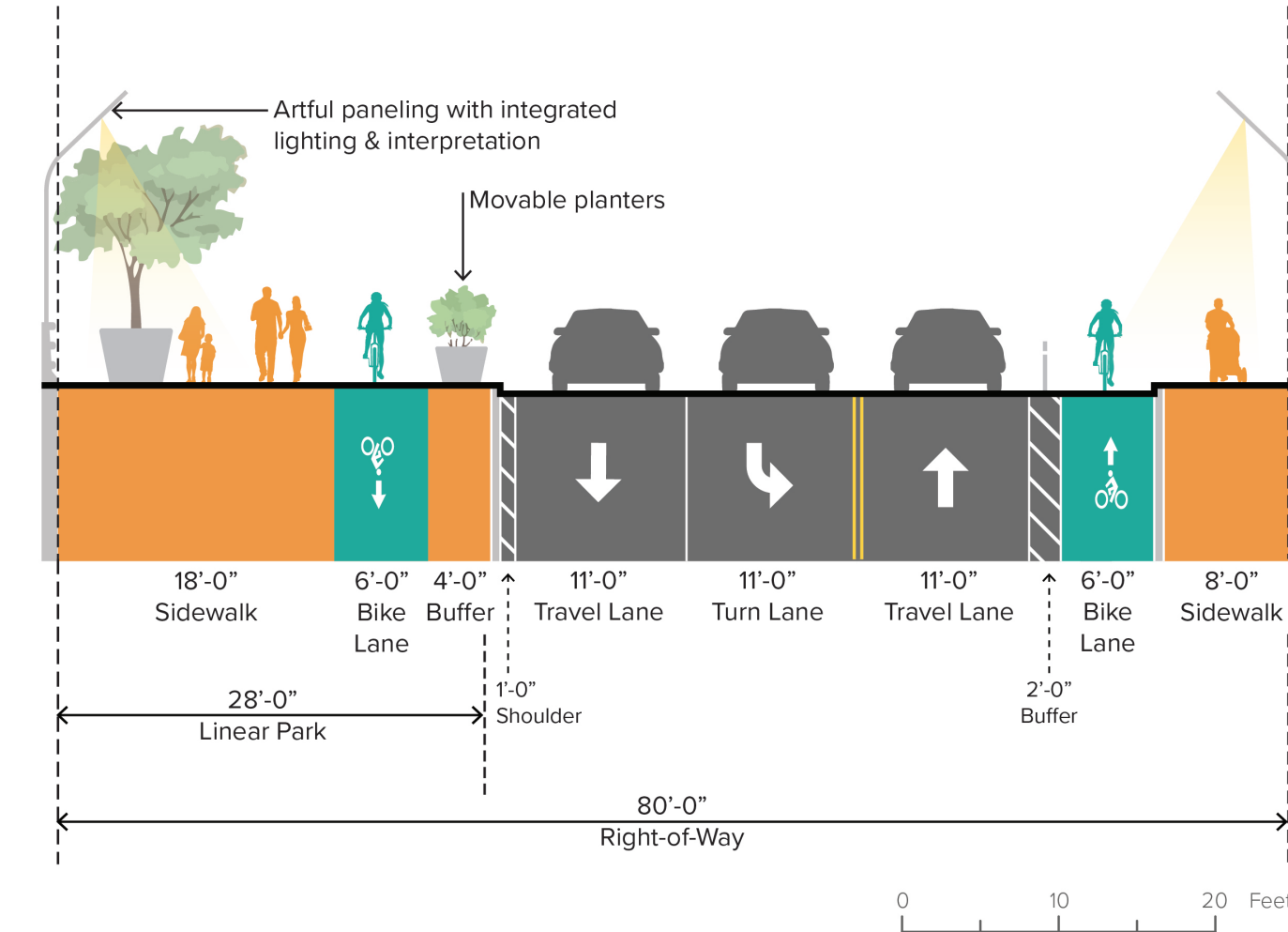
The current 5th Street bridge over I-77 includes 4 lanes for cars, standard bike lanes, and sidewalks. The sidewalks feel narrow and uncomfortable with a low railing at the edge of the bridge deck. Removing the redundant loop ramps between Trade St. and 5th St. provides an opportunity to reimagine and reallocate space within the existing 5th St. bridge dimensions.



The proposed design for the 5th St. bridge reallocates space within the 80-foot bridge deck to create a linear park on the south side of the bridge and emphasize pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between the West End and Uptown. This could be accomplished in two ways, depending on the structural capacity of the bridge.

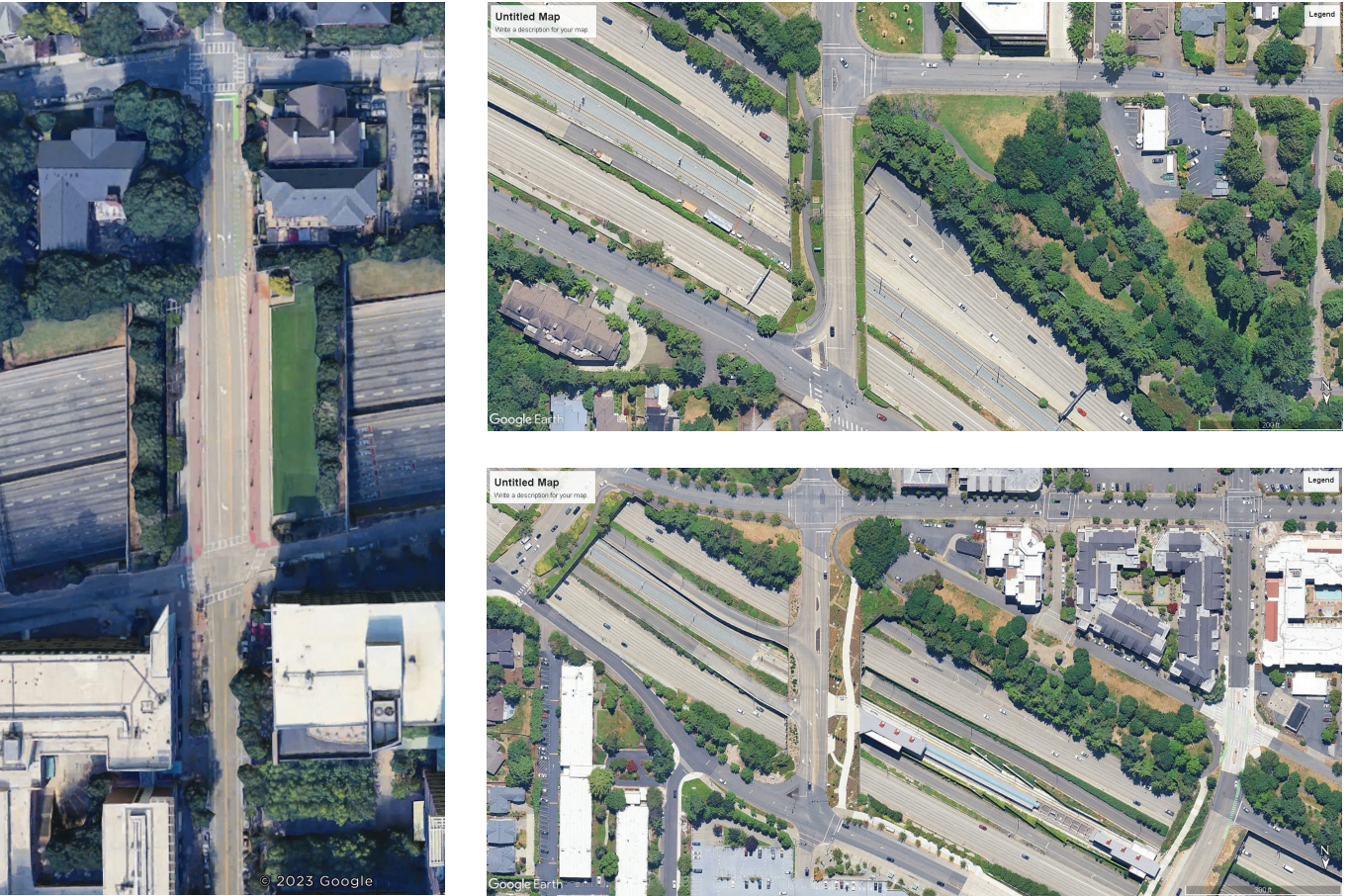
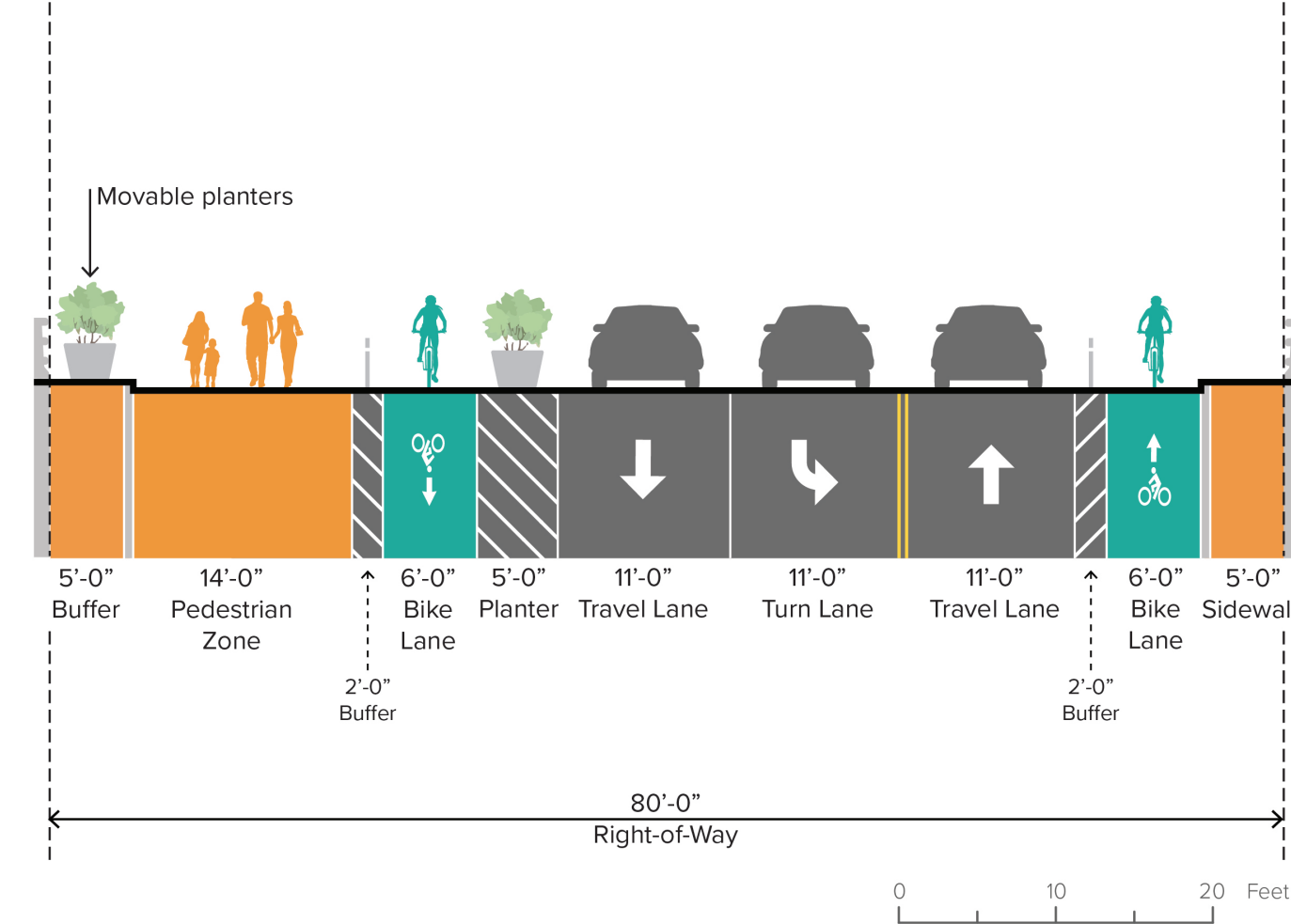
• Proposed Ultimate Condition:

The ultimate vision is to reallocate roadway space to create a 28-foot-wide linear park on the south side of the bridge. The linear park would include a wide sidewalk, benches, lighting, interpretive panels acknowledging the rich history of the West End, planters for small maturing trees, and an inbound (eastbound) bike lane. These features would all be at sidewalk level and buffered from vehicular lanes. The north side of the bridge would include an 8' sidewalk and a buffered outbound (westbound) bike lane.



• Proposed Interim Condition:

Because a structural assessment of the 5th St. bridge is beyond the scope of this study, the capacity of the existing bridge to support additional weight is not known. If the bridge is not replaced through the I-77 South Express Lanes project, and the bridge is not able to support the weight of the improvements recommended for the ultimate condition, the City and NCDOT may elect to pursue interim improvements. In this case, a combination of movable planters, modular concrete barriers/railings, flex posts, and/or pavement markings could be used on the existing bridge deck to create more pedestrian and bicycle space at the existing road grade. The South Blvd. bridge over I-277 in Charlotte was similarly converted in 2009.



Creating linear parks with high-quality pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure on bridges over freeways, like these examples in Atlanta, GA and Mercer Island, WA, is an innovative technique that cities and state DOTs are implementing to reconnect communities across the U.S.

Trade Street

The Lynx Gold Line streetcar on Trade St. is the most significant transit connection between the West End and Uptown. Supporting efficient and convenient Gold Line service is a key objective of the Reconnecting the West End project. CATS plans to extend the Gold Line and develop a new Gateway Station transit center on the west side of Uptown, makes this connection even more important.

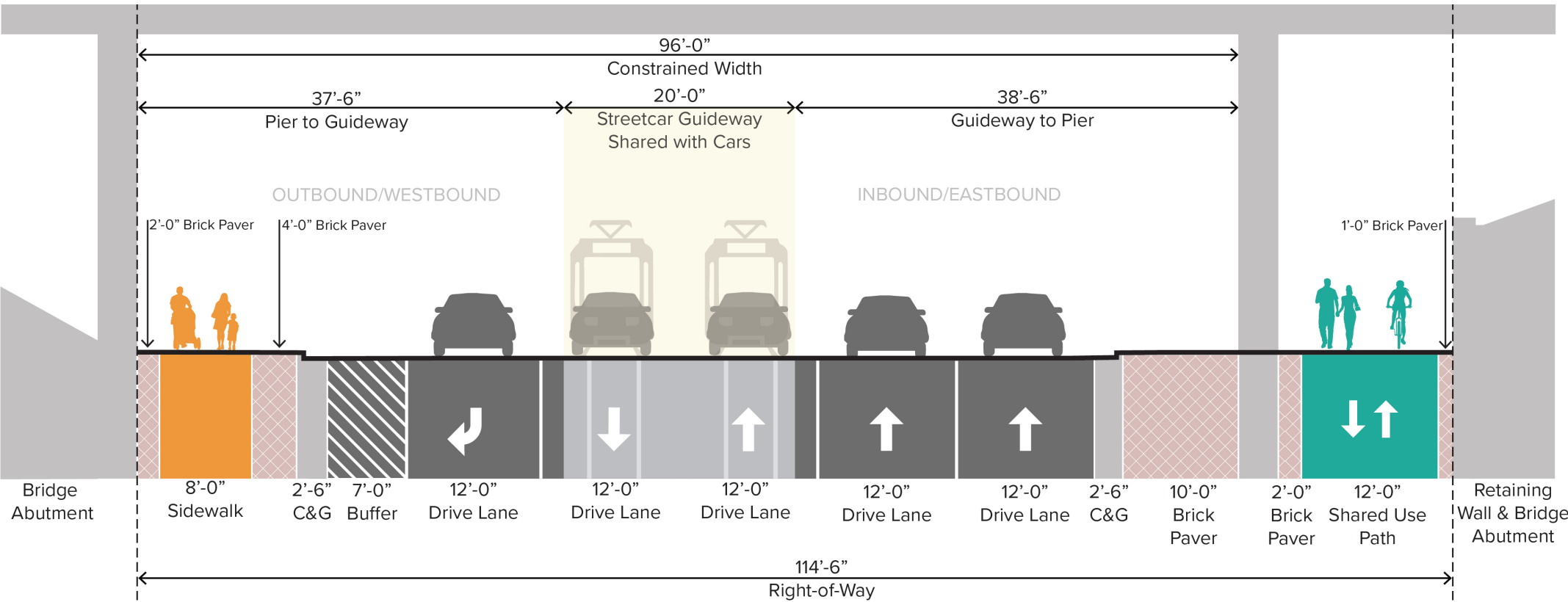
The primary recommendation to enhance Gold Line service between the West End and Uptown is to establish a dedicated guideway for the streetcar through the I-77 interchange area. A dedicated guideway means the streetcar would operate in an exclusive space, as opposed to sharing a lane with cars. This is especially important in the I-77 interchange area because the streetcar would not have to wait in traffic coming to/from the I-77 ramps, ensuring faster and more reliable service times.

- The diagram and images on this page and next illustrate the proposed concept to:
- Achieve a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line through the I-77 / Trade St. interchange.
 - Keep the streetcar tracks where they are.
 - Maintain the existing bridge/piers for I-77 bridge over Trade St.
 - Maintain comfortable pedestrian and bicycle facilities along Trade St.
 - Provide clear/intuitive cues, based on examples from other streetcar cities, to support driver compliance.

“The streetcar is great, but it needs its own lane.”

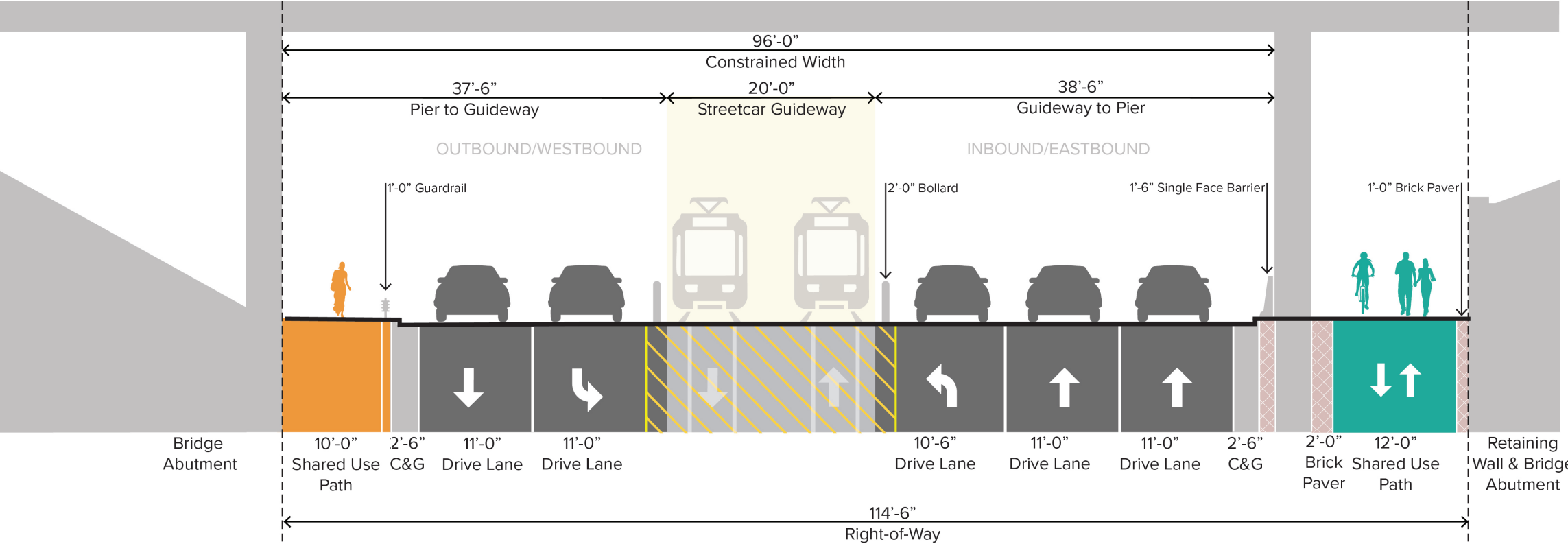
– West End Resident¹⁴

Trade Street Underpass - Existing

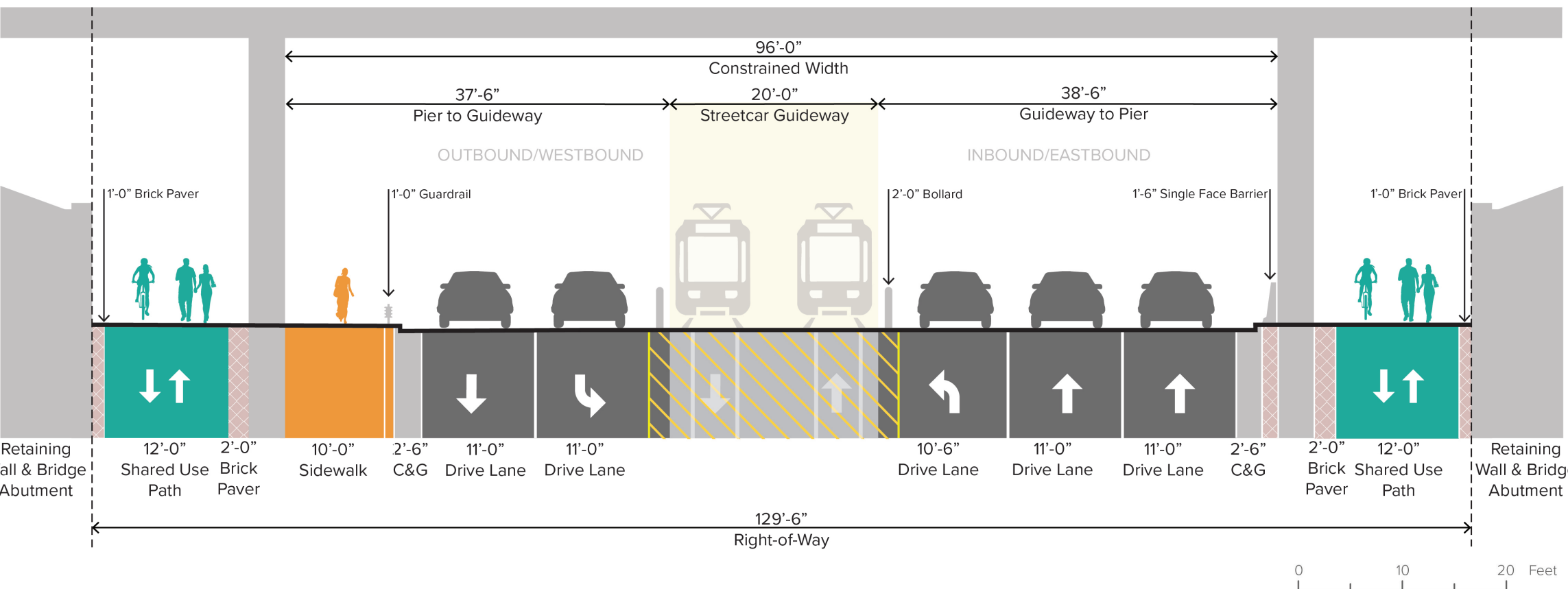


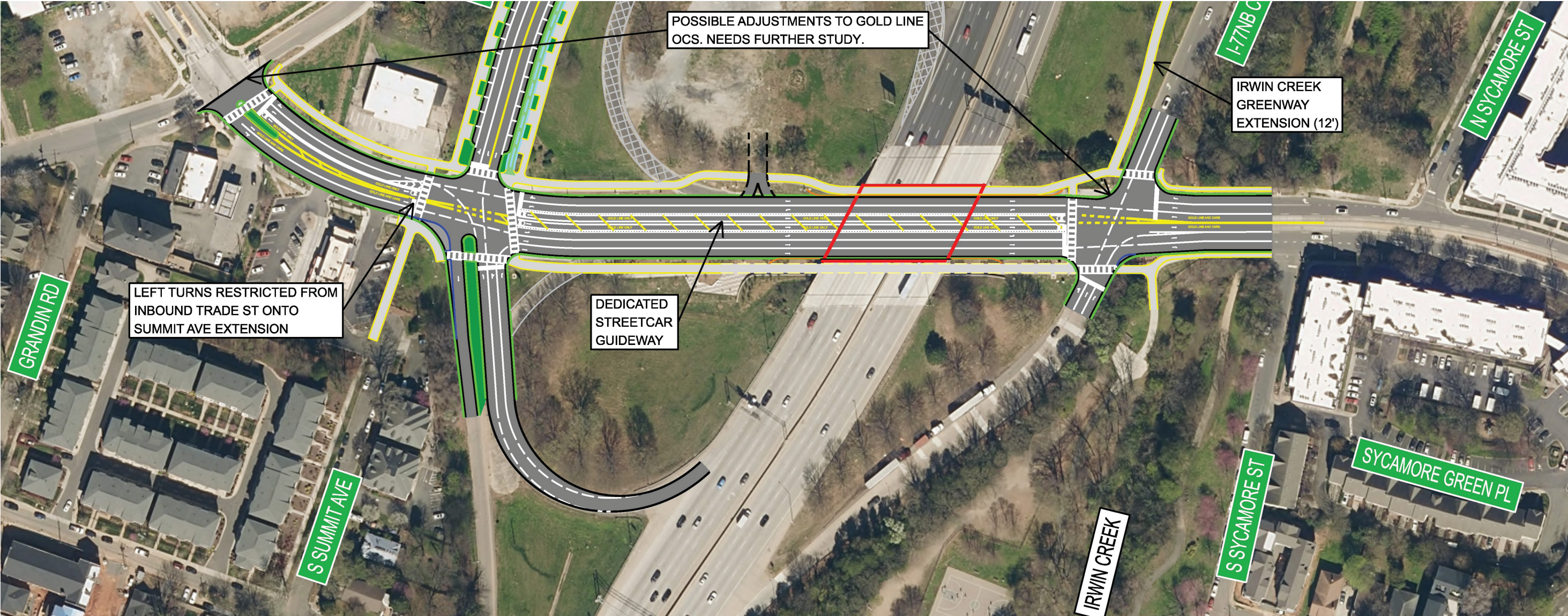
¹⁴ Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. City of Charlotte. May 2025.

Trade Street Underpass - Proposed (Interim Condition)



Trade Street Underpass - Proposed (Ultimate Condition)





Dedicated Guideway for the Gold Line: This feasibility-level concept plan illustrates the potential configuration of a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line streetcar through the West End interchange area. The concept plan is based on aerial imagery, GIS data, and field measurements. It illustrates how a dedicated guideway could be achieved without moving the existing streetcar tracks or impacting the existing I-77 bridge structure over Trade St. Further engineering study is required to fully evaluate the implications of the proposed concept, minimize impacts to the existing Gold Line infrastructure, and maximize the benefit for streetcar operations. (See Appendix A: Concept Design for a feasibility-level concept design illustrating infrastructure improvements across the West End interchange area.)



Other streetcar communities in the United States (like these examples from Kansas City, MO, and Hillsboro, OR) transition between dedicated guideway and shared lane configurations depending on the context of the roadway and adjacent land uses that follow. The design team studied these precedents, and others, to develop recommendations for establishing a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line streetcar through the West End interchange area. (Image credit: Google. 2026.)

Summit Avenue Extension

The extension of Summit Avenue from 5th Street to Trade Street is a key part of the overall vision for reconnecting the West End. This new two-way street would restore part of the street grid that was disrupted when I-77 was constructed in the 1960s. It will serve three primary functions:

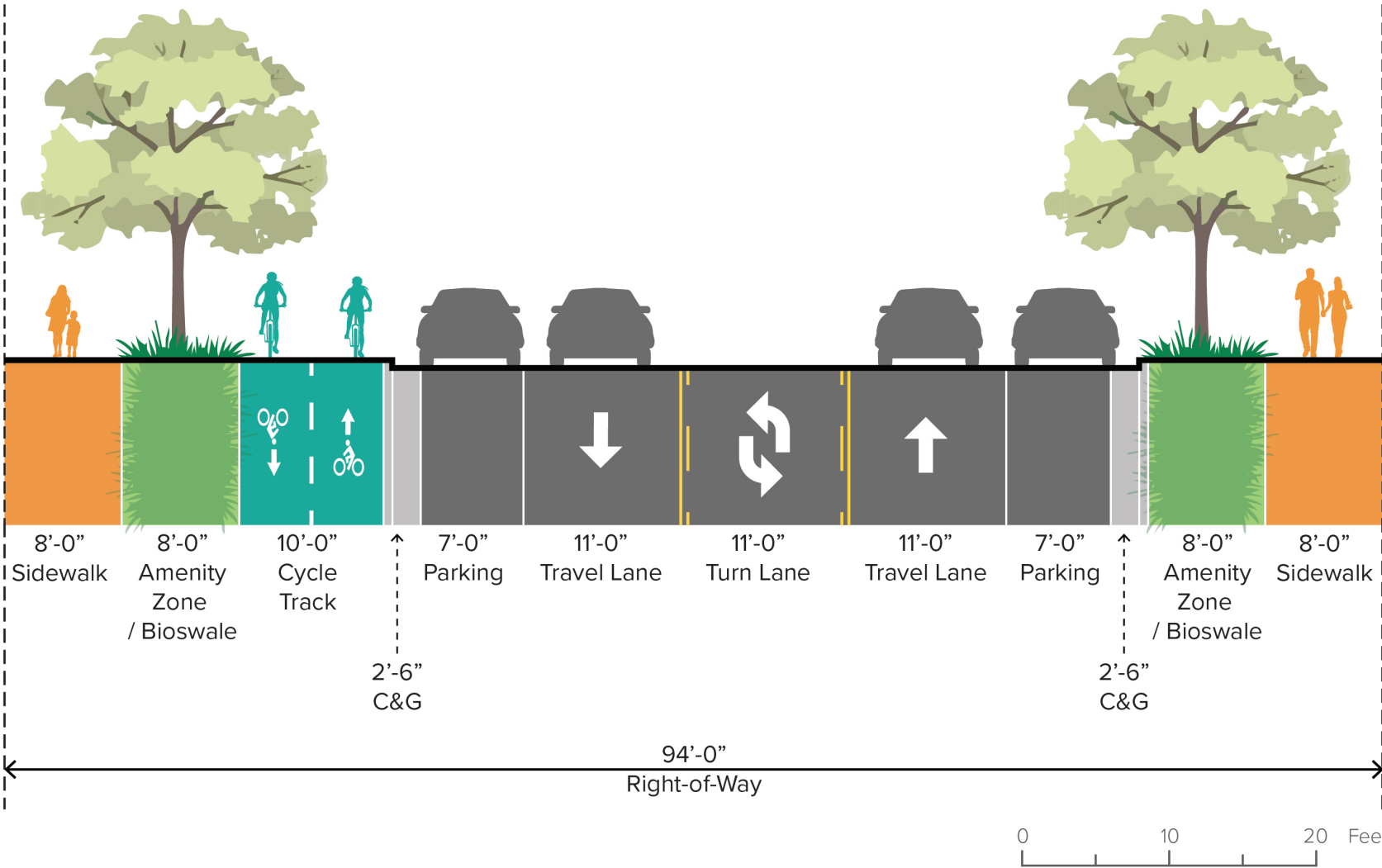
- 1. Creating a new signature multimodal street linking multiple pedestrian and bicycle routes through the West End;
- 2. Supporting access to new development in the reclaimed land area; and
- 3. Providing a new vehicular route within the interchange area and balancing interchange traffic between the 5th Street and Trade Street corridors.

The street is designed with wide sidewalks, pedestrian amenity zones, and on-street parking to support adjacent retail. A raised two-way cycle track on the south side of the street provides a key link between the shared use paths on Trade St., the proposed Irwin Creek Greenway extension to McCrorey Heights, and the Uptown CycleLink and proposed park on 5th Street. Space in the center of the street will be used for left turn lanes and landscaped pedestrian refuge islands to support pedestrian crossings. The pedestrian amenity zone is proposed to include bioswales, a green stormwater infrastructure feature that would capture water for street trees and native plants before transmitting excess water to the stormwater system. These bioswales would be spaced intermittently with hardscape for benches, lighting, and bicycle/micromobility parking.



Pearl Park Way was recently completed in the Brooklyn Village / Midtown area of Charlotte. The design of this street, with a wide sidewalks, a raised two-way cycle track, bioswales, and on-street parking is an ideal precedent for the design of the proposed Summit Avenue extension.

Summit Avenue Extension - Proposed

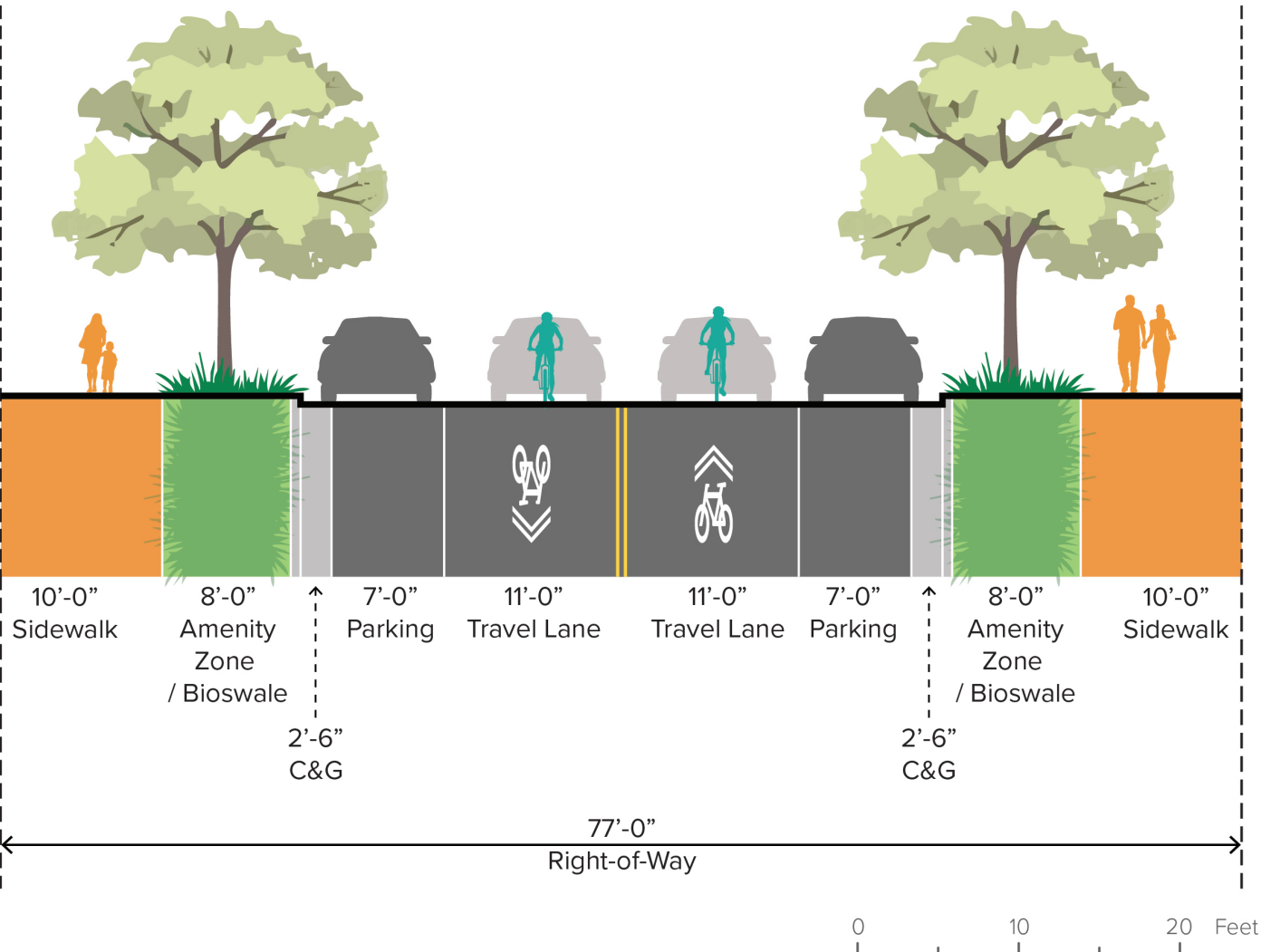


Montgomery Street

Montgomery Street will become a key connection between Trade Street and the new development area reclaimed from the West End interchange. It is envisioned as a local main street, lined with mixed-use buildings and retail storefronts, connecting The West Complex on Trade Street to the proposed county park.

Montgomery Street should be pedestrian in scale with wide sidewalks, a pedestrian amenity zone, and on-street parking. The amenity zone is proposed to include bioswales, a green stormwater infrastructure feature that would capture water for street trees and native plants before transmitting excess water to the stormwater system. These bioswales would be spaced intermittently with hardscape for benches, lighting, and bicycle/micromobility parking.

Montgomery Street - Proposed



PARKS & GREENWAYS

Existing Conditions

The West End has long faced reduced park access due to redlining, disinvestment, and removal of park space for highway construction. The removal of most of Biddleville Park in the 1960s for the construction of I-77 and I-277 is a notable example.

Public parks within the Reconnecting the West End study area include:



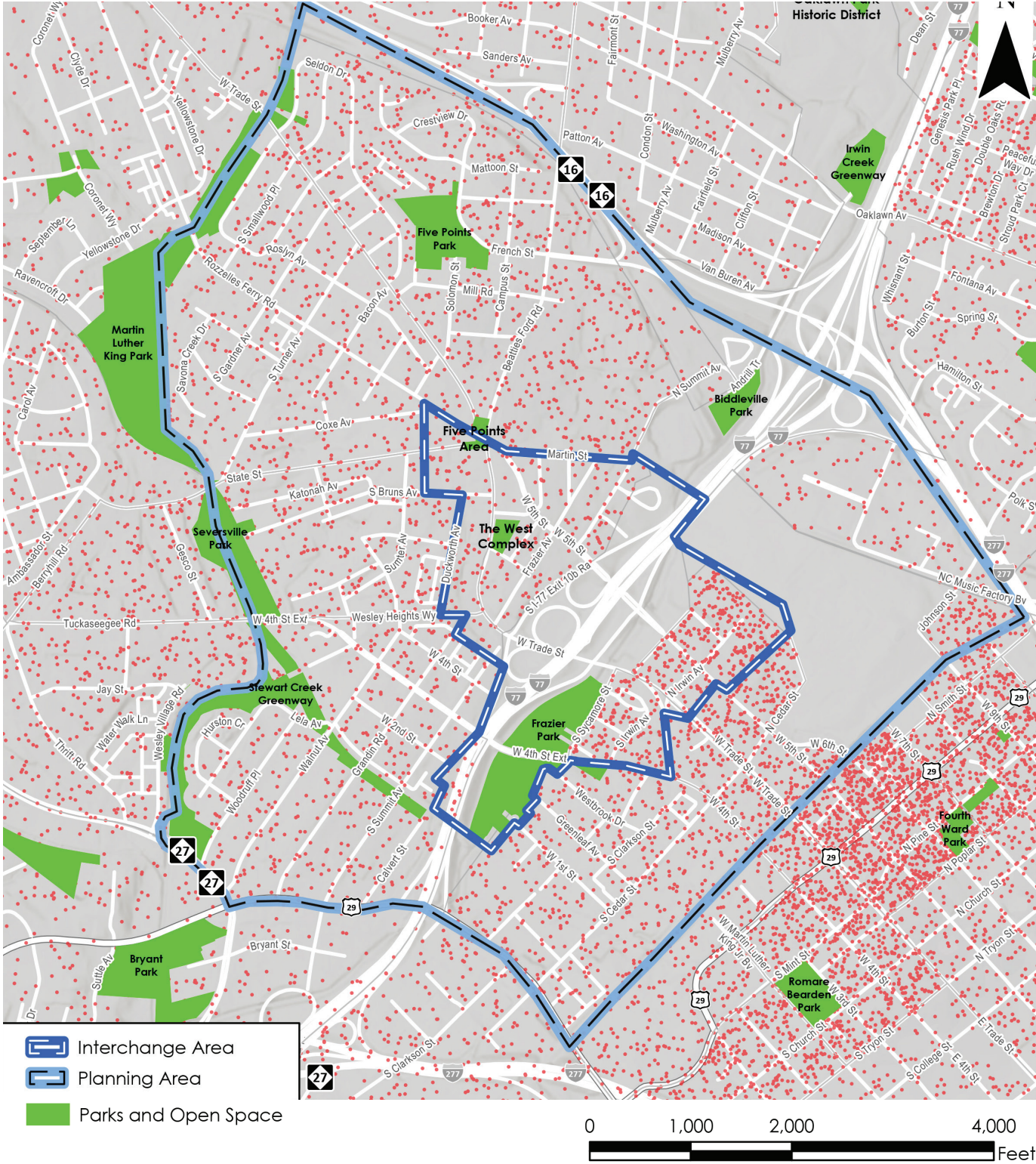
Frazier Park is the largest and most important recreational resource within the study area. It is the largest park in Uptown and serves residents on both sides of I-77.

- **Frazier Park:** Frazier Park is the largest and most important recreational resource within the study area. It is the largest park in Uptown and serves residents on both sides of I-77. Because of Frazier Park’s recreational amenities and greenway connections, it also serves residents from well beyond the immediate planning area. The park includes a large playing field, 2 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, a playground, a dog park, the Irwin Creek Greenway, and a memorial garden for families to honor children who have passed away.
- **Biddleville Park:** The construction of I-77 & I-277 in the 1960s took most of Biddleville Park. The remaining park is isolated by highways and separated from West End neighborhoods. It includes a youth baseball field. The park has been identified by Mecklenburg County as a low-rated park in a priority community.
- **Five Points Park:** Five Points Park is a small community park with a playground, 2 tennis courts, and a basketball court in the Biddleville neighborhood.
- **Five Points Plaza:** Five Points Plaza is located across from JCSU at the intersection of W. Trade St./Rozzelles Ferry Rd./Beatties Ford Rd./W. 5th St. The plaza includes two spaces, one on each side of the intersection. It has a splash pad, amphitheater, public art, moveable furniture and custom swings.¹⁵ Five Points Plaza is unique because it is one of a few public park/plaza spaces owned and maintained by the City of Charlotte.
- **The West Complex:** Owned by JCSU and programmed in partnership with the Five Points Community Collaborative, the West Complex is an informal plaza space and placemaking project in the parking lot of the vacant A&P Supermarket building. It hosts community festivals and JCSU events.¹⁶

The Stewart Creek Greenway, Seversville Park, and Martin Luther King Jr. Park form the western boundary of the study area and also serve as key recreation and transportation assets for the West End.

¹⁵ City of Charlotte Public Spaces. 2026. <https://www.charlottenc.gov/Growth-and-Development/Planning-and-Development/Planning/Urban-Design/Placemaking-Program/Public-Spaces>
¹⁶ JCSU. 2024. <https://westcomplex.jcsuevents.com/>

PUBLIC PARK ACCESS MAP
6 People = 1 Dot (2018 - 2022 ACS)



The West End has been identified by Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation as a priority community for expanding parks access and investment. An evaluation of the County’s park and greenway system found that most of the County’s lowest rated parks (parks most in need of investment and updates) fall within priority communities, like the West End.¹⁷ In addition, nearby greenway/trail assets, like the Irwin Creek Greenway and the Uptown CycleLink currently do not extend into the heart of the West End.

- In a recent survey¹⁸ West End residents:
- Highlighted “Greenways & Trail Connections” and “Parks”as the two most needed community facilities in the West End;
 - Identified “Frazier Park,” “the Irwin/Stewart/Wesley Heights Greenway Network,”and “Five Points Park” as 3 of the top 5 community assets in the West End. (JCSU and the Gold Line streetcar were the other 2.)

Much of the land adjacent to the West End interchange includes critical community assets and recreational resources. These include places like Frazier Park, Elmwood/Pinewood Cemetery, Johnson C. Smith University, and Irwin Academic Center / Ray’s Splash Planet. These are the places that establish the unique identity of the West End and are most important to protect from the potential impacts of future development and infrastructure investments. Reclaiming land from the West End interchange to support new parks and greenways will help repair past damage from highway construction and restore connections across I-77.

¹⁷ Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation. MeckPlaybook 2021 Master Plan.
¹⁸ Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. City of Charlotte. May 2025.

Recommendations for Reconnecting the West End

Key park, recreation, and greenway recommendations for Reconnecting the West End are summarized below. (See the following pages for more details.)

- **Establish a new, signature public park.**
 - Provides new recreational opportunities and a focal point for redevelopment
 - Draws pedestrians/cyclists into the new development area from the recommended linear park along 5th St. and new greenway connections
- **Create a public space network that enriches the redevelopment area and walking/biking experience.**
 - Link plazas, courtyards, and active street frontages throughout the redevelopment area
- **Extend and integrate the Irwin Creek Greenway and Uptown CycleLink into the West End.**
 - Strategic connections create new, high-quality ped/bike experiences between the West End and Uptown
 - Provides direct connections to existing ped/bike facilities (Irwin Creek Greenway, Uptown CycleLink, directional bike lanes on 5th St.) and the planned Irwin Creek Greenway extension



Proposed West End Park

A new park is proposed as a focal point and organizing element for new development within the land reclaimed from the West End interchange. This is a key recommendation for reconnecting the West End. The park will serve as:

- A recreational and civic gathering space in the heart of the West End;
- A connection point between various multimodal networks like the Irwin Creek Greenway and the Uptown CycleLink;
- An opportunity for cultural/historical programming that lifts up the stories of the West End and its people; and
- An important historical acknowledgement and gesture, repairing past harm by restoring some of the land taken from the West End for the construction of I-77.

The proposed park is the heart of the Reconnecting the West End development plan. The ~1.5-acre site includes a playground, an exercise equipment area, a café seating area, native plantings, shade structures, and an events lawn oriented to provide views toward the Uptown skyline.

The plan also includes a “jewel box” building as a community center within the park area. This building could include community meeting space, restrooms, basketball / multi-purpose indoor recreation courts, a café, and other park-focused amenities. Additional indoor community meeting space was emphasized by the Core Advisory Group as a key priority for the proposed park.

With prominent frontage along 5th Street and the new Summit Ave. extension, the park opens seamlessly to the adjacent West End neighborhoods, inviting residents into this vibrant new community destination. The park is oriented to create seamless connections to the new Main Street environment on Montgomery St. (to the south), the Summit Ave. extension with a raised two-way cycle track (to the west), and shared use path connections to the Irwin Creek Greenway (to the north and east).

The design of the park and adjacent development could take many different forms, including alternatives which would modify the redevelopment plan to increase the total acreage of the new proposed park. It is assumed that the park would become part of the County-owned/maintained park system. As such, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation should be involved in future conversations about the redevelopment of the West End interchange area to ensure that the final design for the park is calibrated to the County’s maintenance capacity and protocols. The final design of the park should also be anchored in a broad and inclusive community engagement process so that the final design and programming for the park reflects the needs and desires of West End residents.

Public Space Network

Additional, smaller public spaces are recommended to create a public space network that extends from the redevelopment area out into the broader West End community. In total, the proposed development plan includes ~3 acres of new public spaces, in addition to the proposed West End park. These would most likely be privately-maintained public spaces, although a City-maintained plaza, like the Five Points Plaza, is possible. The actual design, location, and ownership/maintenance of these spaces would be determined in partnership between the City and private development entities. These public spaces would serve a variety of purposes, including:

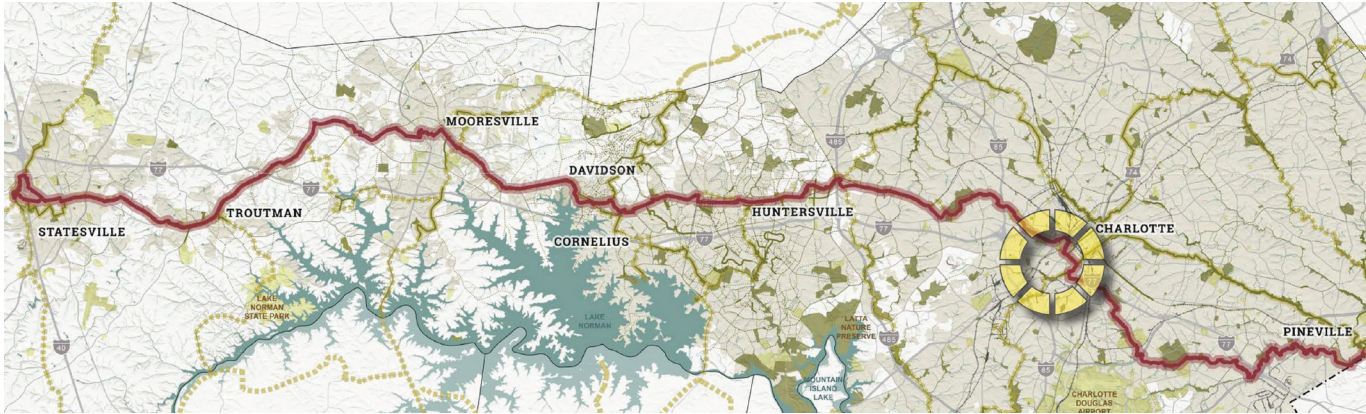
- complementing and connecting new buildings;
- enriching street life and providing opportunities for outdoor dining and sidewalk retail;
- creating space for pocket parks, small playgrounds, and dog runs; and
- integrating trees, landscaping, and bioswales which supports climate resilience by providing shade and stormwater infiltration.



The recommended public space network includes the new proposed West End Park with connections to the Irwin Creek Greenway (shown in green), and a network of smaller public spaces (shown in red) to enrich street life and create space for trees, bioswales, and pocket parks.

Irwin Creek Greenway and Uptown CycleLink

- The Irwin Creek Greenway is among the most important community amenities and active transportation corridors linking the West End and Uptown. The Irwin Creek Greenway is also a critical part of the Seam Trail, a 72-mile greenway corridor stretching from Statesville, NC into South Carolina, linking 8 downtowns, 2 counties, and over 400,000 jobs.¹⁹ Approximately 15 of the 72 miles are already built or funded for construction.



The Irwin Creek Greenway and Charlotte’s West End are highlighted (yellow circle) in the Seam Trail diagram above. The Reconnecting the West End recommendations have important regional significance because they accommodate the planned Seam Trail / Irwin Creek Greenway extension from Frazier Park, across I-77 to JCSU, Biddleville Park, and McCrorey Heights. This will complete a critical link in the heart of the 72-mile Seam Trail alignment

¹⁹ Seam Trail Project Summary. CRTPO. August 2024. <https://seamtrailinc.com/>

- The Uptown CycleLink is the most important and high-quality bike route through Uptown. It’s a ~7-mile network of separated bike lanes that, once complete, will connect the West End to more than 40 miles of bikeways across Charlotte.²⁰

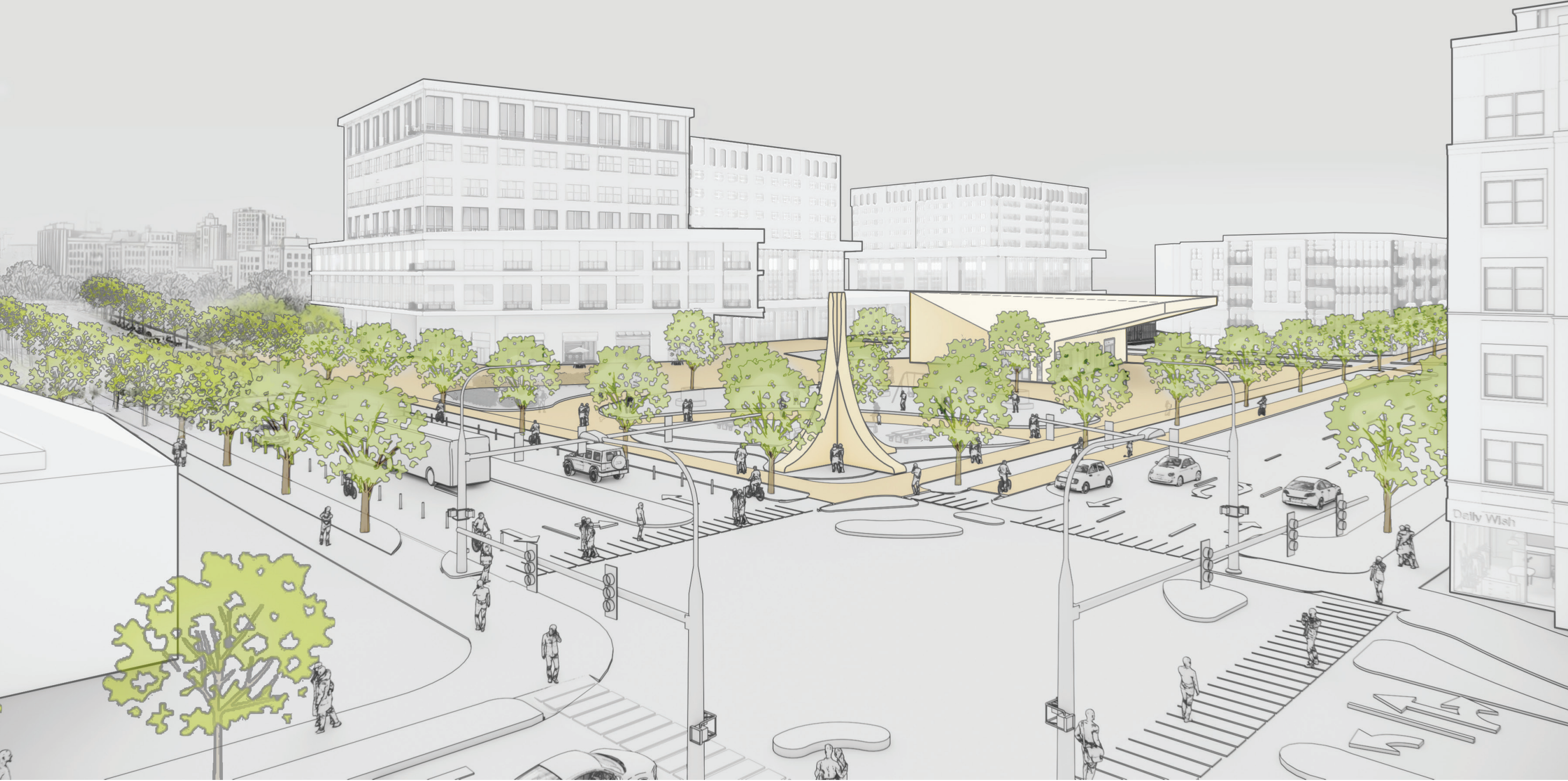


The plan recommendations seamlessly integrate the Uptown CycleLink into the West End through the proposed improvements on the 5th St. bridge and the Summit Ave. extension.

- Key recommendations for extending and integrating the Irwin Creek Greenway and Uptown CycleLink into the West End include: (Also see the Multimodal Network Plan on page 54.)
 - Construct a new Irwin Creek Greenway connector from Trade St. to 5th St. between the I-77 main line and the I-77 northbound connector road;
 - Construct the planned extension of the Irwin Creek Greenway from 5th St. to Biddleville Park / Andriil Terrace;
 - Build a connection from the current end of the Irwin Creek Greenway at Ray’s Splash Planet, around the parking lot to the existing Sycamore St. shared use path and Uptown CycleLink;
 - Reallocate space on 5th St. between Summit Ave. and the I-77 northbound on-ramp to include separated, directional bike lanes and wide sidewalks, effectively extending the Uptown CycleLink to the new proposed park;
 - Include a raised, two-way, cycle track on the proposed Summit Ave. extension, linking the Uptown CycleLink on 5th St. to the shared use paths on Trade St.

²⁰ Uptown CycleLink. City of Charlotte. 2026. <https://www.charlottenc.gov/Growth-and-Development/Projects/Uptown-CycleLink>

5th Street at Summit Avenue looking southeast toward Uptown: A new community park at the intersection of 5th St. and the proposed Summit Ave. extension will restore some of the land taken from the West End for the construction of I-77, provide a new civic gathering space and focal point for development, and link the Irwin Creek Greenway and Uptown CycleLink networks.



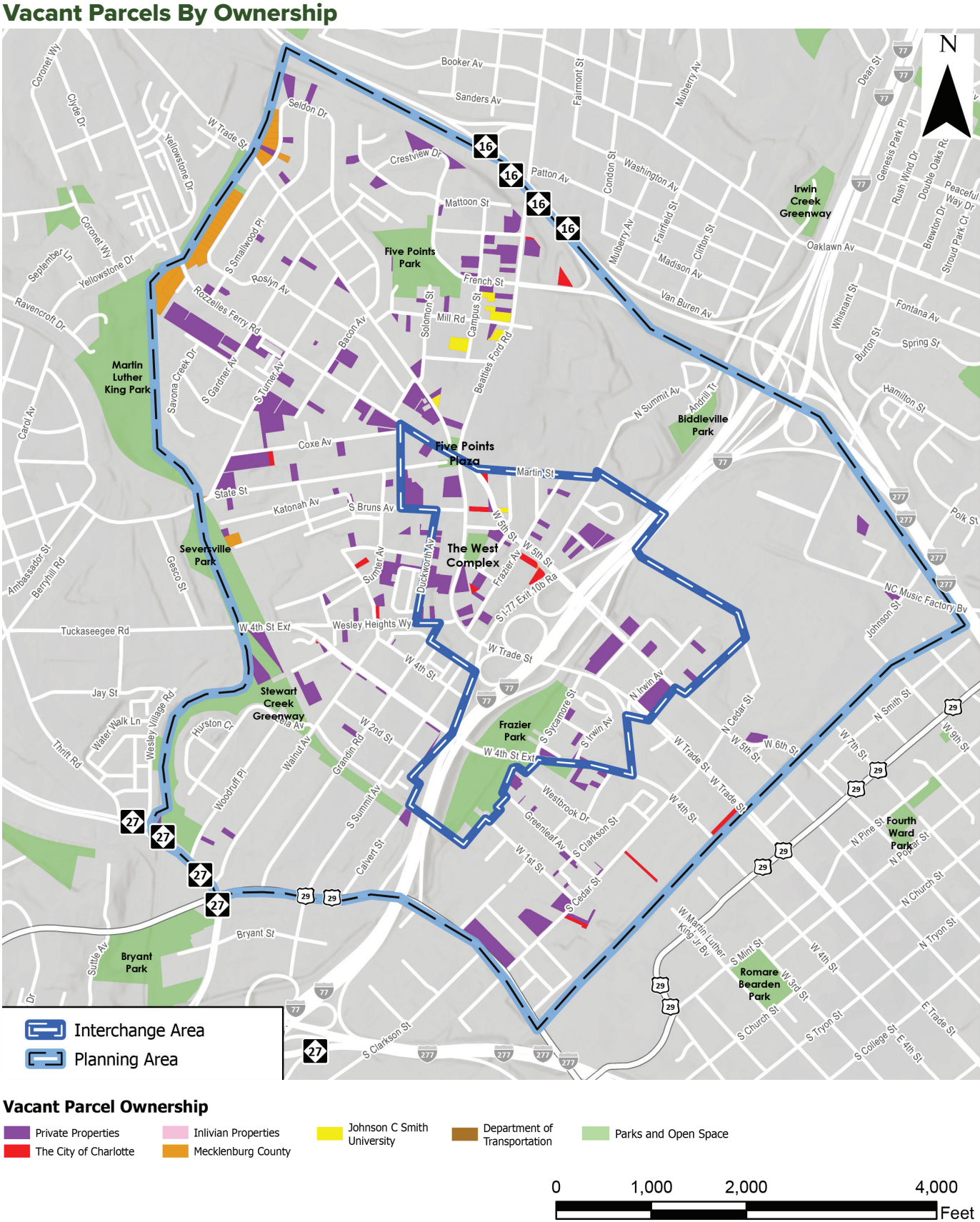
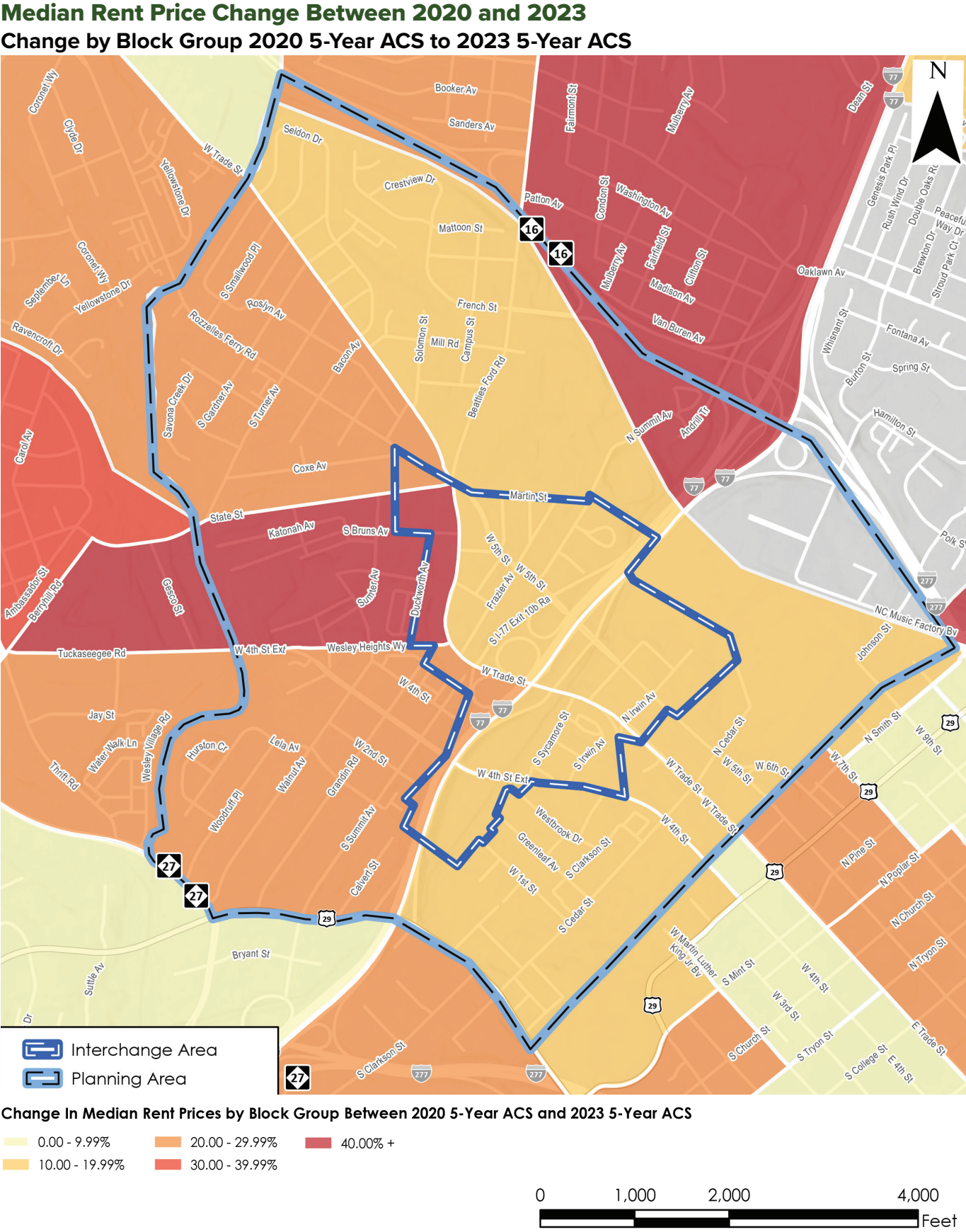
COMMUNITY-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

Existing Conditions

The Historic West End is the cultural and historical heart of Charlotte's Black community, anchored by Johnson C. Smith University, legacy institutions, and long-standing neighborhoods. Community feedback reflects deep pride and multigenerational ties to place, alongside growing concern that increased development pressure near Uptown is diminishing the preservation of history and cultural identity.

Housing is the community's top priority, with strong support for preserving and expanding affordable and mixed-income options that allow long-time residents to remain. Inlivian's Tarlton Hills and a new Historic West End Partners-led workforce housing development represent key opportunities to reinvest in housing, infrastructure, and neighborhood amenities. Residents also emphasized the need for affordable commercial space for small businesses.

The West End has experienced rapidly rising rental costs. This is especially challenging within areas that include a relatively high percentage of people living below the poverty line. The Seversville, Smallwood, and Wesley Heights neighborhoods have seen a dramatic increase in rent prices, some over 40% increase in just 3 years. These are the same areas that have the highest percentage of people in the planning area living below the poverty line, highlighting the need for more affordable housing and affordable transportation options.



“ The West End is rich with history and culture. There are gathering places, parks, greenways and many businesses. I call the Historic West End home and am blessed to live in this diverse community. The West End means culture, family, the original Charlotte. ” – West End Residents²¹

There are over 300 undeveloped parcels in the project planning area. When aggregated with reclaimed land from I-77 and significant land holdings from JCSU, Inlivian, and the City of Charlotte, this presents a transformational opportunity to support large sites for community-centered development along the Gold Line. New development/redevelopment will be important for establishing mixed-income housing opportunities, providing new jobs, and supporting basic community services requested by residents (e.g., pharmacy, childcare, restaurants, grocery, cleaners, healthcare, etc.).

²¹Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. City of Charlotte. May 2025.

Recommendations for Reconnecting the West End

Key recommendations for Reconnecting the West End through community-centered development are summarized below. (See the following pages for more details.)

- Reclaim land from I-77 to better connect the West End to adjacent communities.
- Pursue community-centered, mixed-use, mixed-income development that increases the number of affordable housing units on site.
- Reflect the development character and ideas recommended by the community in the Five Points Forward Plan.
 - Utilize Montgomery St. as a new Main St. connecting Trade St. to the new development area.
 - Concentrate development intensity and structured parking along I-77; Tall along I-77 (~12 stories) stepping down toward Five Points and single-family neighborhoods.
 - Organize development around a focal public space with a new signature pedestrian bicycle connection across I-77.
- Reconnect by integrating history and culture.
 - Anchor new development in culturally and historically relevant programming.
 - Celebrate the important stories and people of the West End.
- Maintain historic properties, recently completed development, and the Gold Line power substation.

Land Reclamation

The proposed interchange redesign supports the reclamation of over 12 acres of land to create community-centered housing, amenities, and public space. The reclaimed land area also presents an extraordinarily strong and valuable site for future community-centered development. The proposed redevelopment area offers:

- Walkable proximity to the Uptown regional center and the Five Points neighborhood center;
- Access to rail transit (Gold Line Streetcar) and I-77;
- Walkable access to two universities, Johnson C. Smith University and Johnson & Wales University; and
- 45,000 residents and 40,000 workers within a 5-minute drive.²²



The proposed interchange redesign supports the reclamation of over 12 acres of land across 3 sites. The plan also acknowledges the likely redevelopment of the roughly 6.5-acre Tarlton Hills affordable housing neighborhood.

²² Gibbs Planning Group. Historic West End Retail Market Analysis. April 2025.

Sites 1 & 2: The largest redevelopment area is a roughly 8.5-acre site between Trade St. and 5th St. (Site 1). When combined with the roughly 6.5-acre Tarlton Hills affordable housing site (Site 2), this creates a 15-acre development area in the heart of West End with direct access to the Gold Line streetcar, regional greenways, and I-77. This is a transformational, once-in-a-generation, opportunity to support a major redevelopment that creates a new gateway to the West End and Uptown. (*See also “Mixed-Income & Senior Housing” on page 90.*)

Site 3: Another potential redevelopment area is the roughly 1.5-acre parcel within the I-77 southbound off-ramp loop to Trade St. Although somewhat constrained within the freeway loop ramp, this parcel offers valuable Trade St. frontage and direct access to the Gold Line streetcar, regional greenways, and I-77. Similarly constrained parcels have been successfully developed in many other cities across the country. Developing this parcel is important to reconnecting the West End by improving the Trade St. walking experience and shortening the perception of distance between the West End and Uptown.

Site 4: The final land reclamation area is a roughly 2-acre site to the north of 5th St. This area is not recommended for redevelopment. Although there is some limited redevelopment opportunity here, most of the site is within floodplain. A more important and community-centered use of this property is to accommodate the planned extension of Irwin Creek Greenway from 5th Street to JCSU, Biddleville Park, and Andriil Terrace.

Other: The plan identifies redevelopment opportunities across the remainder of the study area, many informed by approved rezonings and existing site studies outside of this plan. Johnson C. Smith University is one of the area’s largest landowners and controls the former A&P site north of Tarlton Hills. This development is a key opportunity for the West End and the streetcar corridor.

Land Redevelopment Opportunity Summary Table					
	SITE 1 Reclaimed land from removal of I-77 southbound loop ramps between Trade St. and 5th St.	SITE 2 Current Tarlton Hills affordable housing site	SITE 3 Reclaimed land within I-77 southbound off-ramp loop to Trade St.	SITE 4 Reclaimed land from shifting I-77 southbound off-ramp to 5th St.	TOTALS
Acreage	~8.5 acres	~6.5 acres	~1.5 acres	~2 acres	~18.5 acres
Estimated Land Value ²³	\$34.85M	\$10.6M	\$6.15M	\$8.2M	\$59.8M
Estimated Property Tax Revenue	\$4.38M/yr ²⁴		\$240,000/yr ²⁵	n/a	TAX \$4.62M/yr
Recommended Use	Combined redevelopment site with mixed-use, mixed-income development; High intensity development (~12 stories) along I-77, stepping down to more moderate intensity development (3-5 stories) near adjacent single-family neighborhoods.		Moderate intensity commercial/office development; Provides more consistent streetscape environment on Trade St.	Greenway / Park	

²³ Based on recent sales of properties in/near the I-77 West End interchange area, the estimated land value for the planned redevelopment area is \$4.1M/acre. (Shook Kelley. West End Interchange Area: Land Valuation Analysis. 2025 dollars.)

²⁴ Due to the extraordinary opportunity of this site, this value is based on an average of the top quartile of property taxes per acre for properties with a similar location and a similar intensity of development to what might be expected in the West End interchange area. (Kittelson & Associates. West End Interchange Area: Potential Property Tax Generation Analysis. 2024 dollars. Based on Mecklenburg County 2024 property taxes.)

²⁵ This value is based on the median property taxes/acre for properties with a similar location and a similar intensity of development to what might be expected in the West End interchange area. (Kittelson & Associates. West End Interchange Area: Potential Property Tax Generation Analysis. 2024 dollars. Based on Mecklenburg County 2024 property taxes.)

Proposed Development Plan

The proposed development plan illustrates one potential outcome for community-focused redevelopment in land reclaimed from I-77. Ultimately, a series of incremental decisions made by the City of Charlotte, NCDOT, Inlivian, and private development partners will determine the type and timing of any future redevelopment.

The proposed development plan for Reconnecting the West End supports a large, multi-block, mixed-use, transit-oriented community totaling roughly 6M sq. ft. in new development. The plan emphasizes opportunities for development intensity along I-77 transitioning to mid-rise and townhome uses in the areas closer to the adjacent single-family neighborhoods. Major use components include apartments, townhouses, offices, retail, a hotel, space for the expansion of community institutions, and multiple structured parking decks.

The plan is strongly residential-led, with ~2,500 housing units, including ~600 units (24% of total) which are affordable at 60% area median income or below. The housing components are balanced with ~ 1.2M sq. ft. of office space and over 130,000 sq. ft. of community-serving retail uses, supporting a true mixed-use district. Several buildings along I-77 and the proposed Summit Avenue extension serve as anchors for development intensity, combining large multifamily and office buildings with street-level retail and structured parking. Institutional and co-op market components embedded in the office/retail fabric are positioned to reinforce community-serving uses.

Together, these plan elements establish a resilient, mixed-income, mixed-use urban district that is rooted in the surrounding community. By pairing a residential-led framework with significant investments in office, retail, institutional, hotel, and structured parking uses, the plan supports everyday needs while reinforcing Johnson C. Smith University, Inlivian, and local civic assets as long-term anchors.

(See key on next page.)



Proposed Developments

DEVELOPMENT SITE	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATES					
	HEIGHT	MARKET-RATE HOUSING	AFFORDABLE HOUSING (60% AMI AND BELOW)	RETAIL	OFFICE	INSTITUTIONAL
A. Mixed-use block with office, residential, retail, and structured parking. This is the largest and tallest proposed development site, intended to concentrate structured parking and development intensity along I-77. Building height is assumed at 17 stories, although taller buildings may be appropriate/feasible.	17 stories	352 Units	88 Units	41,600 sq. ft.	792,600 sq. ft.	N/A
B. A mid-scale (~200-room) hotel would be a viable use on this constrained site, with convenient access to I-77 and the Gold Line. Development here would improve the pedestrian experience and shorten the perception of distance across the West End interchange.	5 stories	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
C. Commercial block (office over retail) emphasizing active frontages on Trade St. and the extension of Summit Ave.	8-10 Stories	N/A	N/A	11,400 sq. ft.	328,500 sq. ft.	N/A
D. Mid-rise apartment building, with structured parking, and ground-floor retail along the extension of Summit Ave.	6 stories	163 Units	29 Units	12,000 sq. ft.	N/A	N/A
E. Proposed 1.5-acre (or larger) community park with a new community center building	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
F. Mixed-income, multifamily, residential building with structured parking.	7 stories	200 Units	90 Units	N/A	N/A	N/A
G. This is a large mixed-income housing block with several building types (mid-rise apartments and townhomes), giving it a strong neighborhood-residential character.	6 stories	156 Units	28 Units	N/A	N/A	N/A
H. A mixed-use block including office and residential components.	6 stories	135 Units	24 Units	N/A	25,600 sq. ft.	N/A
I. A mid-rise, mixed-use, residential block with two apartment buildings over a small ground-floor retail footprint.	6 stories	153 Units	27 Units	15,000 sq. ft.	N/A	N/A
J. A predominantly residential block with structured parking and several building types (podium wrap apartments and townhomes), giving it a strong neighborhood-residential character.	3-6 stories	108 Units	20 Units	10,200 sq. ft.	N/A	N/A
K. This block is modeled entirely as townhomes, split between for-sale market-rate units and affordable rental units.	3 Stories	20 Units	20 Units	N/A	N/A	N/A
L. This block is modeled entirely as for-sale townhomes with a height and density that transitions seamlessly to the existing neighborhood character to the north/west.	3 Stories	45 Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
M. A mixed-income, residential apartment building paired with structured parking.	6 stories	76 Units	13 Units	N/A	N/A	N/A
N. This mixed-use block is proposed as a future phase of the Mosaic Village development. It includes office, residential, retail, and structured parking.	6 -7 Stories	75 Units	14 Units	3,100 sq. ft.	106,200 sq. ft.	N/A
O. A large apartment building with a wrapped parking deck and ground-floor retail facing a small plaza at Five Points.	5 stories	172 Units	30 Units	7,000 sq. ft.	N/A	N/A
P. A mixed-use block with affordable housing, office, and a supermarket.	6 stories	26 Units	103 Units	29,900 sq. ft.	19,400 sq. ft.	N/A
Q. A mixed-use project with special-purpose housing and religious uses on the Clinton Chapel property.	6 stories	N/A	119 Units	N/A	N/A	18,000 sq. ft.
R. Proposed student housing with ground-floor retail and shared parking for the Johnson C. Smith University campus.	5 stories	N/A	N/A	5,900 sq. ft.	N/A	180,700 sq. ft.
S. A residential block overlooking Irwin Creek and the greenway.	5 stories	112 Units	N / A	N/A	N/A	N/A
T. Proposed as a small townhome development on a constrained site.	3 Stories	20 Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
U. Proposed as a small townhome development on a narrow site.	3 Stories	79 Units	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
V. A mid-rise office tower - currently under construction.	Illustrated in plan drawing, but not included as part of proposed development plan.					
	Estimated Totals	~1,900 Market-Rate Housing Units	~600 Affordable Housing Units (about 24% of all units)	~136,000 Retail sq. ft.	~1.2M Office sq. ft.	~200,000 Institutional sq. ft.

Proposed Development Plan



The proposed development plan includes a variety of building types and a gradient of development intensity - taller and denser along I-77, stepping down toward adjacent residential neighborhoods. Informed by the recommendations of the community-led Five Points Forward Plan, the proposed development plan supports large, cosmopolitan, mixed-use buildings centered on a new park and strong multimodal connections across I-77. (Left: A new community center building and public park with 5- to 12-story mixed-use buildings at the intersection of Montgomery St. and the proposed Summit Ave. extension. Right: A variety of mixed-income housing types at the intersection of Flint St. and Montgomery St.)

Reconnecting by Integrating History and Culture

As the seedbed of Charlotte's civil rights movement, and a center of Black intellectual life and culture, the West End and JCSU have been home to some of Charlotte's most extraordinary people and stories. Leveraging new development to celebrate these important people and stories in a culturally relevant way is a key recommendation for reconnecting the West End.

For example, the proposed park and new greenway connections are among the most important recommendations for reconnecting the West End because they provide the greatest opportunity to:

1. restore land that was taken from the community for the construction of I-77, and
2. anchor the proposed improvements in culturally and historically relevant programming that celebrates the rich history of the West End.

An arts and culture installation using interpretive panels to tell the story of the West End should be woven throughout the new development area – beginning at Five Points, continuing down Trade Street and Montgomery Street through the new proposed park, extending along the redesigned 5th Street bridge into Uptown, and concluding with Irwin Avenue which leads to Irwin Academic Center, which was formerly Harding High School, integrated in 1957. The yellow dots in the diagram above illustrate opportunities to integrate potential arts and culture installations along this route. The Purposeful Walk in Charlotte's historic 2nd Ward provides an inspiring example.



Flint St. and Montgomery St. looking toward Tarlton Hills: A redevelopment of the Tarlton Hills neighborhood could provide improved mixed-income housing, better multimodal connections, and an increase in the total number of affordable units on site. Any redevelopment of Tarlton Hills should be phased to allow existing residents to stay in place until new units are ready for them to move into.

Potential Locations for Arts & Culture Installations



Mixed-Income & Senior Housing

The redevelopment of the Tarlton Hills neighborhood is a sensitive undertaking, requiring thoughtfulness, care, and engagement with current Tarlton Hills residents. Inlivian, the owner/operator of Tarlton Hills, has indicated that the current apartments are approaching the end of their useful life. Built in 1984, the apartments lack some basic amenities, like central air conditioning, and have become more challenging to maintain. Inlivian is interested in redeveloping the site at a higher intensity, with more affordable units in a mixed-income, mixed-use development. Any redevelopment of Tarlton Hills should be phased, in coordination with the development of new affordable units on adjacent redevelopment sites, to allow the existing residents to stay in place until new units are ready for them to move into. The proposed development plan would significantly increase the overall number of affordable housing units in the study area, from 50 units to roughly 600 (affordable at 60% area median income and below), without displacing current residents.

During the public engagement for Reconnecting the West End residents indicated a desire for more senior services and senior housing opportunities in the West End. In addition, the scale and mixture of the proposed development program offers an opportunity to provide more wrap-around support services for affordable and senior housing residents (e.g., childcare, career & financial counseling, benefits navigation, primary healthcare, etc.).

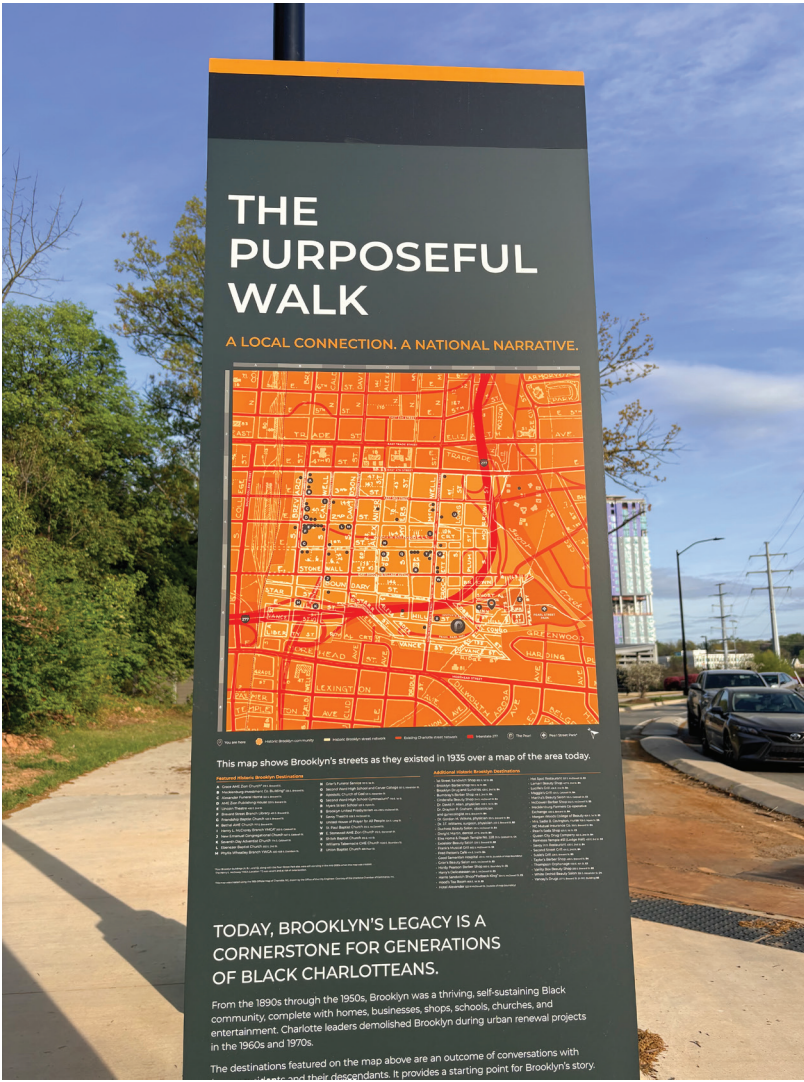
Achieving the recommended development program will require thoughtful collaboration between key landowners (NCDOT, City of Charlotte, Inlivian, JCSU) and the community. (See the implementation recommendations in Chapter 4 for more details on using an RFP process to find private partners that can support the desired uses.)

“New development should provide a place for seniors, not just young people.”

“Culture, history, and preservation are what the West End means to me.”

“The West End is Black culture, history, and opportunity.”

– West End Residents²⁶



From the 1890s through the 1950s, Charlotte’s Brooklyn neighborhood was a thriving, self-sustaining Black community. Charlotte leaders demolished Brooklyn during highway construction and urban renewal projects in the 1960s and 1970s. The Purposeful Walk is an arts and culture installation using interpretive panels to tell the story of Brooklyn and reconnect the community to its historic and cultural roots. The result of a 3-year collaboration and research through the JCSU historical archives, the Purposeful Walk is activated by art installations, gathering spaces, and narratives from former Brooklyn residents. These rich stories form a living museum that inspires current and future generations.²⁷

²⁶ Reconnecting the West End Stakeholder Meeting. City of Charlotte. November 2025.

²⁷ Reconnecting the West End Resident Survey. City of Charlotte. May 2025



04

Reconnecting The West End: Implementation Plan

The plan for reconnecting the West End includes a comprehensive set of recommendations to strengthen multimodal connections, expand parks, and support community-centered development. Implementing these recommendations could occur in a variety of ways, likely involving a series of coordinated actions by government agencies, community-based organizations, and private developers working in partnership.

This chapter describes some probable pathways for implementation, recognizing that multiple other approaches may be viable. It outlines potential projects, funding sources, and processes for implementation. It also identifies specific action items with responsible parties for moving the plan recommendations from vision to reality.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS & CONCEPT DESIGN

Recommended Projects

The vision for reconnecting the West End is comprised of a series of interrelated infrastructure and development/redevelopment projects. The map at right and the table on the next page illustrate the various individual projects that add up to the comprehensive vision.

- Each project includes:
- a detailed description of project purpose and proposed improvements;
 - the types of multimodal improvements that are included in that project; and
 - a list of possible funding mechanisms to support the project.

Some projects are necessary precursors to other projects. For example, the first four projects in the list capture the proposed modifications to the West End interchange. These projects are required before most of the projects that follow, like the development of a new community park and the redesign of 5th Street to include improved multimodal connections.

Altogether, these projects support a comprehensive suite of public and private investments that accomplish the goals and shared vision for reconnecting the West End.

Concept Design

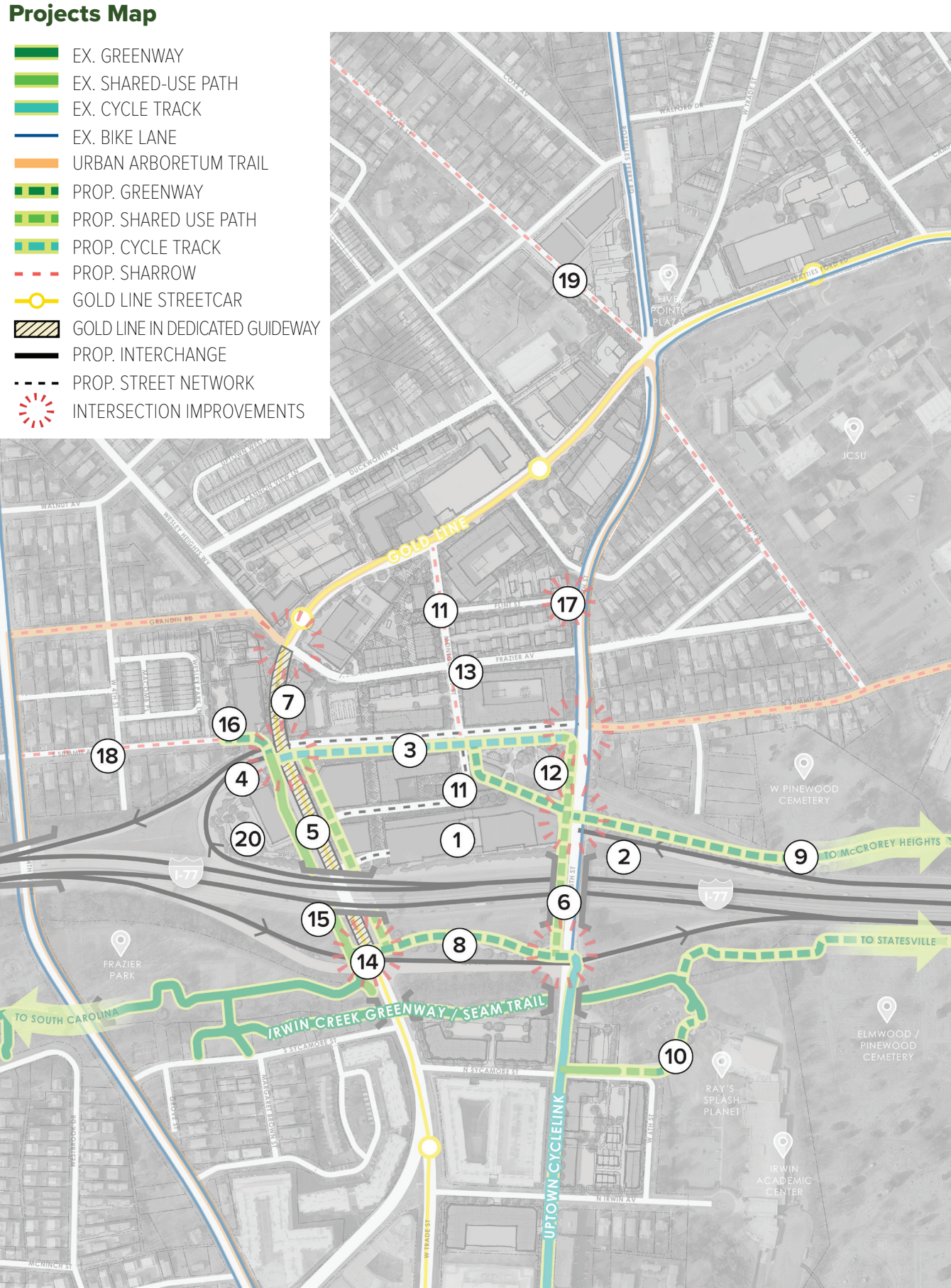
The project design team developed a preliminary concept design for the most important and significant projects recommended by the Reconnecting the West End Plan. (See Appendix A: West End Interchange: Concept Design.) The purpose of this preliminary concept plan is to confirm the feasibility of proposed improvements.

The concept plan is intended to be used for high-level project evaluation and development only. It is not based on detailed survey information. It is based on the most recent available aerial maps, GIS information, and field measurements in limited locations. Survey and further engineering study are needed to advance the individual project recommendations to more detailed phases of project design/engineering.

Based on all information available at the time this plan was completed, the recommendations for reconnecting the West End can be advanced with or without the I-77 South Express Lanes (I-5718) project.

Action Items

- Complete preliminary engineering for RWE improvements to refine project design and cost estimates.
- Complete a community-based study to guide the design of the proposed park.



PROJECT NAME	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENTS BY MODE			
		PEDESTRIAN	BICYCLE	TRANSIT	AUTOMOBILE
1. Removal of I-77 SB Loop Ramps between 5th St. and Trade St. & Development of Reclaimed Land Area	This project will remove the I-77 SB loop ramps between 5th St. and Trade St. to open up a ~8.5-acre site for redevelopment.	X	X		X (improves existing weave section on I-77)
2. Shifting I-77 SB Off-Ramp to 5th St.	This project will shift the existing I-77 SB off-ramp to 5th St. further east and closer to the I-77 main line. The project will also shift the diverge point from the I-77 mainline to occur closer to 5th St., which will create more space between the outside edge of the ramp and the end of the culvert over Irwin Creek. The potential project includes a new traffic signal where 5th St. meets the adjusted off-ramp location. The goal of this project is to create space for an extension of Irwin Creek Greenway from 5th St. to Biddleville Park and to establish more balanced signal spacing between the intersections at 5th St./I-77 NB On-Ramp; 5th St./I-77SB Off-Ramp; and 5th St./Summit Ave.				X (improves existing weave section on I-77)
3. Summit Ave. Extension between 5th St. and Trade St.	This project will install a new two-way, city-maintained street from the I-77 SB Ramps at Trade St. to the intersection of 5th St. and Summit Ave. The new street is proposed to include a raised two-way bike lane (on the south side), 8’ amenity zones with bio swales, 8’ sidewalks, and on-street parking. The project includes a new traffic signal and protected intersection treatments at the intersection of 5th St. and Summit Ave. The project also includes a new traffic signal at the intersection of Summit Ave. and Montgomery St.	X	X	X	X
4. I-77 SB Off-Ramp to Trade St. Redesign	This project will remove the free-flow, channelized right turn from the I-77 SB off-ramp to Trade St. It will shift that movement to be signal-controlled at the existing intersection and align with the new Summit Ave. extension between 5th St. and Trade St. This will eliminate the free-flow off-ramp conflict with the Trade St. shared use path and improve safety and comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists moving between the West End and Uptown.	X	X		
5. Gold Line Dedicated Guideway Conversion between I-77 Ramps	This project will reconfigure Trade St. to establish a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line through the interchange area - from Trade St. at the I-77 northbound ramps to Trade St. at Frazier Ave. The goal of the project is to remove vehicular queues from the Gold Line and improve the Gold Line operations and service times through the interchange area. The project will keep the streetcar tracks and existing I-77 bridge piers in their present location. The project will widen Trade St. within those existing constraints to ensure sufficient vehicular capacity, while maintaining a 10’ shared use path on the north side and a 12’ shared use path on the south side. (Note - supplemental widening of Trade St. between the I-77 southbound ramps and Frazier Ave. is captured in project #7.)			X	X
6. 5th Street Redesign	This project will reallocate space on the 5th St. bridge over I-77 to improve the pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The project will add separation to the existing directional bike lanes and create a new shared use path on the south side of the bridge. The shared use path will connect the new proposed park and new segments of the Irwin Creek Greenways on the West End and Uptown sides of the bridge. The bridge will include landscaping, public art, and taller, more attractive barriers/railings at the edges of the bridge. (Note - this project assumes reuse of the existing 5th St. bridge structure, as opposed to rebuilding the bridge.)	X	X		
7. Outbound Trade St. Widening between Frazier Ave. and I-77 SB Ramp	This project will widen Trade St. on the outbound (westbound) side between Frazier Ave. and the I-77 SB off-ramp. The goal of the project is to support the dedicated guideway transition for the Gold Line, increase left turn capacity from outbound Trade St. onto Wesley Heights Way, and improve traffic operations through the interchange area. (Note - all assumptions for adjustments to Gold Line OCS poles are captured in project #5.)			X	X
8. Trade St. to 5th St. Greenway Connector	This project will construct a new segment of Irwin Creek Greenway between Trade St. and 5th St. The greenway will run between the I-77 mainline and the I-77 NB connector road on the Uptown side of I-77. At Trade St. the greenway will connect to the Trade St. shared use path and the existing Irwin Creek Greenway connector. At 5th St. the greenway will connect to the proposed 5th St. bridge redesign.	X	X		
9. Irwin Creek Greenway Extension from 5th Street toward Biddleville Park	This project will construct a new extension of the Irwin Creek Greenway from 5th St. toward Biddleville Park. At 5th St. the project will connect to the proposed 5th St. bridge redesign. At Biddleville Park the project will connect to Andrill Terrace, which provides an opportunity for a future neighborhood greenway connection to McCrorey Heights and Oaklawn Ave. This is a key segment of the County’s proposed Irwin Creek Greenway alignment, and could become the primary alignment for The Seam Trail.	X	X		
10. Irwin Creek Greenway Extension around Ray’s Splash Planet Parking Lot	This project will install a new greenway connection between the Irwin Creek Greenway at Ray’s Splash Planet to the existing shared use path on N. Sycamore St. This project is an important link to create an accessible pedestrian connection and a more intuitive pedestrian/ bicycle route between the current terminus of Irwin Creek Greenway, the Uptown CycleLink, and the redesigned 5th St bridge.	X	X		

PROJECT NAME	DESCRIPTION	IMPROVEMENTS BY MODE			
		PEDESTRIAN	BICYCLE	TRANSIT	AUTOMOBILE
11. Montgomery St. Streetscape & Extension	This project will improve Montgomery St. between Trade St. and Frazier Ave. It will also extend Montgomery St. into the new development area reclaimed from the I-77 SB loop ramps between Trade St. and 5th St. The improvements will support Montgomery St. as a new Main Street for the redevelopment of Tarlton Hills and the reclaimed land area. Improvements would include 8’ amenity zones with bioswales, 10’ sidewalks, and on-street parking.	X	X		X
12. Development of New Park	This project will construct a new county park at the intersection of 5th St. and the new Summit Avenue extension. The goal of the park is to provide a new park/civic space in the West End, provide a focal point and organizing element for new development, and mitigate potential impacts to Frazier Park from the I-77 South Express Lanes project. The project may also include public art, streetscape enhancements, interpretive signage, landscaping, and other improvements to create a linear park on the south side of 5th Street between the new Summit Avenue extension and Irwin Ave.	X	X		
13. Tarlton Hills Streetscape Improvements	This project would include streetscape improvements to Frazier St., Flint St., and Montgomery St. This is anticipated to occur as a part of potential future redevelopment of Inlivian’s Tarlton Hills affordable housing development. That 50-unit development, built in 1984, is approaching the end of its useful life. The development plan for Reconnecting the West End, proposes redevelopment of the ~6.5-acre Tarlton Hill site with a mixed-income, mixed-use development that increases the total number of affordable units on site. This development would be phased to prevent the displacement of residents. New affordable units would be ready to receive existing residents on-site before the current buildings are redeveloped.	X	X		
14. I-77 NB Ramp at Trade Street Improvements	This project will install a truck apron at the southeast corner of the I-77 NB off-ramp to Trade St. to calm turning traffic. It will also remove the free-flow, channelized right turn from outbound Trade St. onto the I-77 NB connector road to improve pedestrian comfort and alleviate pedestrian conflicts.	X	X		
15. Trade St. Shared Use Path Improvements	This project will install pavement markings and destination-based bicycle wayfinding signage on the existing Trade St. shared use path between the I-77 SB ramps and the Irwin Creek Greenway connector. The goal of this project is to promote recognition of the shared use path as a facility for both pedestrians and bicyclists and make it more intuitive as a network connection to other routes and destinations.	X	X		
16. Ped/Bike Connection Improvements from S. Summit Ave. to Trade St.	This project will install a shared use path connection from the dead-end of S. Summit Ave. to the southwest corner of the Trade St. and I-77 SB ramps intersection. The project will also widen the existing sidewalk at that corner to a shared-use path width and install destination-based bicycle wayfinding signage.	X	X		
17. Improvement of Flint St. Connection to 5th St.	This project will improve the existing staircase from the dead-end of Flint St. to the 5th St. sidewalk. The project would widen and/or replace the existing stairway and install a bike rail and landscaping. Further study is required to determine if installing an ADA-compliant sidewalk ramp connection is feasible.	X	X		
18. S. Summit Ave. Sharrows	This project will install sharrows on S. Summit Ave. between the Trade St. shared use path and the Wesley Heights Greenway. The project will also install destination-based bicycle wayfinding signage. The goal of this project is to promote recognition of S. Summit Ave. as a useful, low-stress bicycle route and make it more intuitive as a network connection to other routes and destinations.		X		
19. State St. Sharrows	This project will install sharrows on State St. between Five Points and the Stewart Creek Greenway. The project will also install destination-based bicycle wayfinding signage. The goal of this project is to promote recognition of State St. as a useful, low-stress bicycle route and make it more intuitive as a network connection to other routes and destinations.		X		
20. Development of Reclaimed Land Area in the I-77 SB Off-Ramp Loop to Trade St.	This project will redevelop the ~1.5-acre site inside the I-77 SB off-ramp loop to Trade St. The goal of the project is to provide an opportunity for redevelopment, create more building frontage along Trade St., improve the Trade St. walking/biking experience, and decrease the perception of distance and separation created by I-77.	X	X		

Funding

Delivering the infrastructure needed to reconnect the West End will require substantial and sustained investment, reflecting both the high cost of modern transportation infrastructure and the long-term value of improved mobility, safety, and access. Transformative projects are rarely funded through a single source. They often depend on a strategic blend of local, state, and federal funding aligned around shared priorities. Coordinating among agencies to assemble the right mix of funding sources will be essential to moving projects from plan to implementation.

Investment in Reconnecting the West End is not just a transportation decision. It is a commitment to repairing past harm, providing economic opportunity, and enhancing neighborhood connectivity, public safety, and quality of life.

Local

Funding from local government agencies will be a critical part of the overall funding mix, with the City of Charlotte playing a large role. The City’s Capital Investment Plan (CIP) is a 5-year program of projects/ programs that is updated every year. The most recent, FY2026-2030 CIP, includes \$100M for affordable housing and \$238M for transportation,²⁸ the largest CIP investment in transportation in the City’s history. The largest categories of transportation investments are for multimodal improvements in “Strategic Investment Areas” (\$55M), improvements to the citywide sidewalk network (\$50M), and safety improvements through the City’s Vision Zero program (\$20M). The Reconnecting the West End projects are aligned with these priorities and many could be supported by future Charlotte CIP investments in transportation and affordable housing.

In addition, Mecklenburg County voters recently approved a countywide sales tax referendum. The successful measure will increase sales tax by 1% in Mecklenburg County. 40% of the total revenue from the sales tax increase is reserved for improvements to “roads, sidewalks, bike paths, and intersection upgrades to improve safety and mobility for all residents.”²⁹ In Charlotte, this is anticipated to generate \$102M for road investment in the first year and \$5.7B for road investment over the next 30 years.³⁰ City leaders and staff are currently discussing next steps for a “Big Moves” program of projects, to be built over the next 5 years, that will leverage sales tax revenue to support multimodal safety and accessibility in key areas.³¹ The sales tax revenue is a significant new funding source for the City which could be leveraged to support the infrastructure recommendations from the Reconnecting the West End Plan.

While the City of Charlotte is likely to be the most significant source of local funds, it’s possible that other local government entities could get involved. For example, Mecklenburg County may decide to participate by designing, building, and/or maintaining the proposed community park. Similarly, CATS may decide to support some of the changes necessary to establish a dedicated guideway for the Gold Line that improves streetcar reliability and service times. Determining the right mix of project and funding responsibilities across these 3 local government agencies (the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and CATS) will be an important next step for reconnecting the West End.

²⁸ FY2026 Proposed Budget Presentation. City of Charlotte. 5.12.25.

<https://charlottenc.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7375186&GUID=0E8E4236-6640-4368-8C99-A6779D463E70>

²⁹ “Voters Approve Mecklenburg County Tax Referendum.” CATS. 11.5.25.

<https://www.charlottenc.gov/CATS/News/Voters-Approve-Mecklenburg-County-Tax-Referendum-to-Improve-Public-Transportation-and-Transit-Systems>

³⁰ FY2026 Proposed Budget Presentation. City of Charlotte. 5.12.25.

<https://charlottenc.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7375186&GUID=0E8E4236-6640-4368-8C99-A6779D463E70>

³¹ City Council Sets Strategic Course on Safety, Mobility and Housing. City of Charlotte. 3.4.26. <https://www.charlottenc.gov/City-News/2026-Annual-Strategy-Meeting-Recap>

State

I-77 is a state-maintained facility and any changes to the West End interchange will require extensive NCDOT coordination and approval. NCDOT funding will also likely play an important role in implementing the recommendations for reconnecting the West End. The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) currently estimates the I-77 South Express Lanes (I-5718) project will cost \$4.3B (expenditure year dollars), with up to \$600M coming from the State and the remainder coming from a private corporation via a public/private partnership.³²

If the express lanes project moves forward, that project represents a significant funding opportunity to implement the project recommendations of this plan. Improvements recommended by the Reconnecting the West End Plan could be incorporated as a part of the necessary improvements for the I-77 South Express Lanes project or as negotiated mitigations to offset potential impacts from the express lanes project. Determining which of the proposed Reconnecting the West End improvements will be advanced through the I-77 South Express Lanes project will be a key next step for implementing this plan.

Federal

Federal discretionary grants could also be an important source of funding for implementing project recommendations. The projects recommended in this plan would be competitive candidates for implementation grants through the USDOT BUILD program, the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program, the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Grant Program, and the Neighborhood Access and Equity (NAE) program. The RCP and NAE programs were most recently offered through a combined Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) in July 2023. While another NOFO for the RCP & NAE programs is not expected in the near term, a future congressional reauthorization could extend those opportunities for implementation funding. Other federal discretionary grant programs may also be applicable.

Based on previous NOFOs, the expected minimum and maximum grant award amounts for these federal grant programs are listed in the chart at right for reference.

GRANT PROGRAM	MINIMUM AWARD AMOUNT FOR URBAN AREAS	MAXIMUM AWARD AMOUNT FOR URBAN AREAS
BUILD Capital Grants	\$5M	\$25M
SS4A Implementation Grant	\$2.5M	\$25M
Reconnecting Communities Capital Construction Grants ³³	\$5M	\$100M
Neighborhood Access & Equity Capital Grants ³⁴	None	None

Depending on the mix of local and federal funds that are secured to support the Reconnecting the West End projects, federal funds could play a smaller role in filling funding gaps, or they could play a major role in funding key improvements.

Action Items

- Incorporate key Reconnecting the West End (RWE) recommendations within applicable adopted plans & capital investment plans.
- Amend the MTP to include the proposed RWE improvements.

³³ Per USDOT, this reflects the expected range of award amounts for the last round of the Reconnecting Communities Capital Construction Grants program. No additional rounds of Reconnecting Communities grants are expected without a congressional reauthorization or USDOT policy change.

³⁴ There were not any statutory minimum or maximum award amounts for the NAE grant program. Award sizes were determined by USDOT based on project scope, competitiveness, and available funding. No additional rounds of Neighborhood Access and Equity grants are expected without a congressional reauthorization or USDOT policy change.

Modifying The West End Interchange

Modifying the West End Interchange will require a multi-step, collaborative process between the City of Charlotte, NCDOT, and FHWA. Under federal law, any changes that affect how traffic enters or exits an interstate must be approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The formal process used to seek this approval is called an Interchange Modification Request (IMR).

In practice, an IMR is documented through a technical report called an Interstate Access Justification Report (IAJR). The report must demonstrate that the proposed interchange modification meets federal requirements related to safety, operations, and system performance, and that it is consistent with regional and statewide transportation plans.

In addition, modifying the West End interchange will require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). While the IMR process is used to evaluate interstate safety and operations, the NEPA process is used to evaluate environmental impacts and public interest considerations. These two federal processes are linked and should be advanced in parallel. FHWA will not grant approval for modifying the West End interchange until both processes are complete.

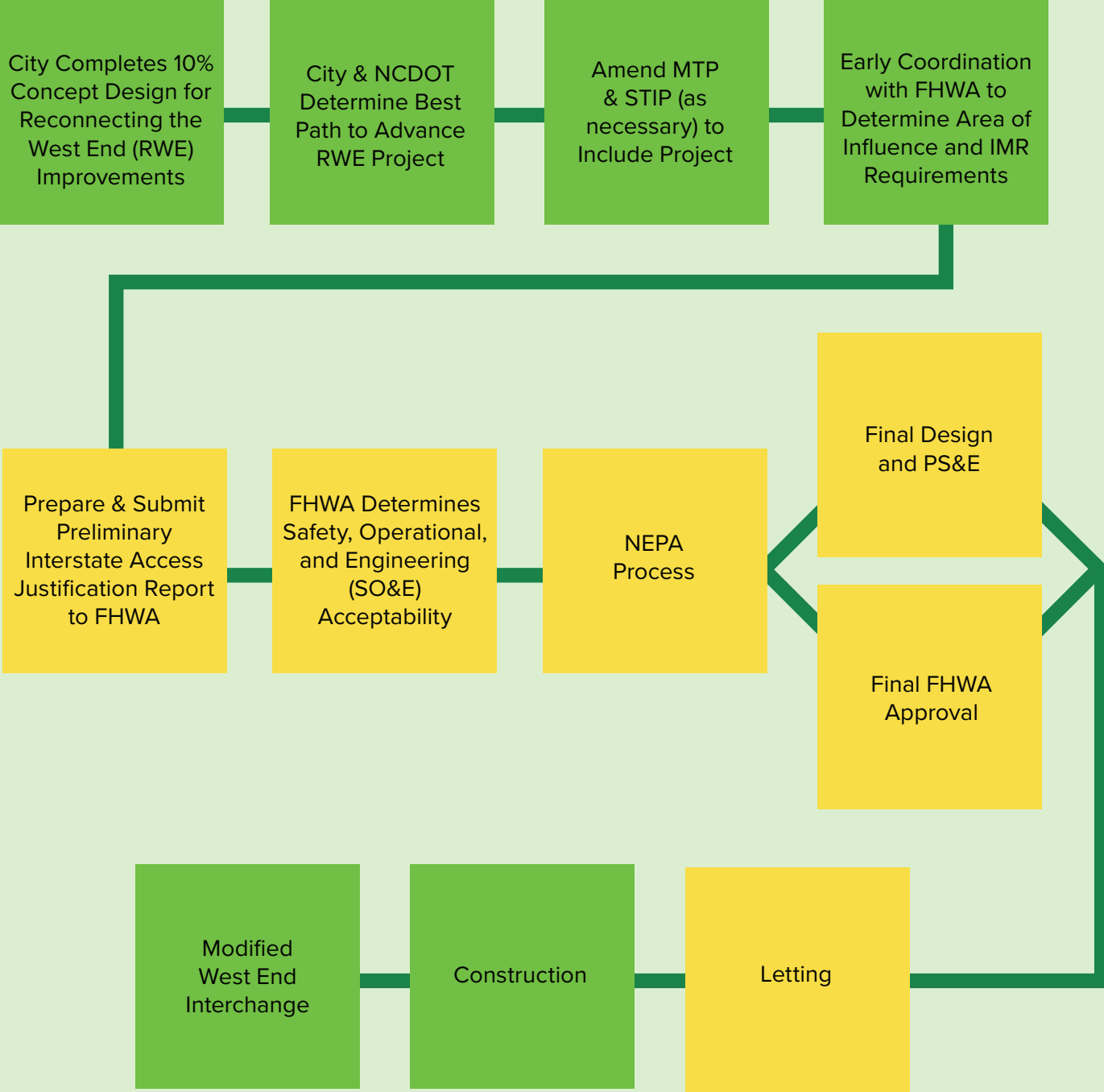
There are two primary pathways for advancing the Reconnecting the West End project through the IMR/NEPA processes. One would be city-led, independent of the potential I-77 South Express Lanes Project, and one would be led by NCDOT, as part of the I-77 South Express Lanes Project. The flowchart shown at right illustrates the key procedural steps and agencies involved in navigating these processes.

Action Items

- Coordinate with NCDOT to advance RWE recommendations.
- Construct infrastructure improvements to support new interchange configuration, new greenway connections, and land reclamation opportunity.

HOW TO MODIFY THE WEST END INTERCHANGE

(NOTE - Not all of the improvements recommended in the Reconnecting the West End Plan would follow this process. This flowchart is only applicable to improvements which would modify the the interstate system - I-77 mainline, ramps, and ramp terminal intersections.)



Reclaimed Land & Redevelopment

Private development partners will play a critical role in transforming reclaimed interchange land into vibrant, mixed-use places that deliver housing, jobs, and neighborhood amenities. To ensure private investment aligns with public goals, development expectations must be clearly reflected in the City's regulatory and planning tools. This includes the City's adopted Streets Map and any future rezonings within the West End interchange area. These tools and processes establish a predictable environment for investment while safeguarding priorities such as mixed-income housing, walkability, cultural expression, and long-term community benefit.

Private Investment & Public-Private Partnerships (P3)

One way to effectively align private investment with public and community goals is to manage development through a public-private partnership (P3) approach. In a P3, public agencies typically bring land and financial incentives, while private developers bring capital, design expertise, and construction capacity. If established and managed effectively, a P3 could offer a powerful tool to implement the community vision set forth in this plan.

To ensure redevelopment is community-focused and advances desired outcomes, the City and any partner agencies and/or participating landowners, should consider including clear expectations into any Request(s) for Proposals (RFP) from private developers to redevelop land within the West End interchange area. Key terms expressed in the RFP could include:

- Minimum requirements for mixed-income housing with a defined share of units affordable to households across a range of incomes;
- Requirements to deliver public spaces, utilities, and streets consistent with the adopted Streets Map;
- Alignment with community design and cultural goals;
- Provisions to prioritize local hiring and small business inclusion;
- Provisions to provide long-term maintenance and/or programming of public spaces; and
- Enforceable timelines for delivery.

By setting these terms upfront, the City establishes a transparent partnership framework, providing certainty to developers while ensuring that new investment supports inclusive, community-focused growth and the overall vision for reconnecting the West End.

Implementation Committee & Measuring Success

The City could consider identifying a Reconnecting the West End Implementation Committee composed of key representatives from the West End community (i.e. residents, neighborhood organizations, businesses, institutions) as well as agency partners. The purpose of the Implementation Committee would be to ensure that infrastructure and development projects meet the goals of this plan and contribute incremental progress toward the ultimate vision.

- **Infrastructure Investment:** For infrastructure projects, the committee would provide input on design plans and help spread the word about public engagement opportunities.
- **Land Development/Redevelopment:** For redevelopment proposals, the committee would assist with the production of RFP(s) and review individual development proposals.

To support this work, the committee could establish performance measures to objectively assess how well proposals align with community priorities. Similar tools used in other cities have proven effective in structuring dialogue between developers, public agencies, and residents, empowering the community to shape projects in real time while providing greater predictability for developers and project teams.

Action Items

- Amend the Charlotte Streets Map to reflect recommended streetscape improvements so that adjacent development supports implementation.
- Consider identifying a RWE Implementation Committee to oversee the implementation of infrastructure improvements and assist in the evaluation of development proposals.
- Determine the appropriate pathway for transfer and redevelopment of reclaimed land.

NEXT STEPS FOR RECONNECTING THE WEST END

Action Steps

The table on the next page presents the implementation actions for reconnecting the West End, translating the plan's recommendations into a clear set of actionable steps. It identifies key actions and responsibilities across city, county, state, transit, institutional, private, and community partners. This framework is intended to promote coordination, accountability, and transparency as proposed improvements move from planning to execution.

This framework also illustrates how individual, incremental actions work together to advance the overall vision for reconnecting the West End. The implementation action items are listed roughly in chronological order, although many of the action items could be advanced in parallel. Together, the action items serve as a roadmap to guide the delivery of improved multimodal connections, expanded parks and greenways, and new community-centered development in the West End.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Incorporate key Reconnecting the West End (RWE) recommendations within applicable adopted plans & capital investment plans.
2. Amend the MTP to include the proposed RWE improvements.
3. Coordinate with NCDOT to advance RWE recommendations.
4. Amend the Charlotte Streets Map to reflect recommended streetscape improvements so that adjacent development supports implementation.
5. Consider identifying a RWE Implementation Committee to oversee the implementation of infrastructure improvements and assist in the evaluation of development proposals.
6. Complete a community-based study to guide the design of the proposed park.
7. Complete preliminary engineering for RWE improvements to refine project design and cost estimates.
8. Determine appropriate pathway for transfer and redevelopment of reclaimed land.
9. Construct infrastructure improvements to support new interchange configuration, new greenway connections, and land reclamation opportunity.

ACTION ITEM	NOTES	THIS ACTION ITEM SUPPORTS			IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS (● = LEAD; ○ = SUPPORT)								
		MULTIMODAL CONNECTIONS	PARKS & GREENWAYS	COMMUNITY CENTERED DEVELOPMENT	CITY OF CHARLOTTE	MECKLENBURG COUNTY	NCDOT	CATS	CRTPO	INLIVIAN / TARLTON HILLS	JCSU	PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
1. Incorporate key Reconnecting the West End (RWE) recommendations within applicable adopted plans & capital investment plans.	This is especially important for the recommended transportation improvements because improvements that are recommended in a locally-adopted transportation plan may be eligible for state funding per NCDOT's Complete Streets Policy.	X			●	●	●						
2. Amend the MTP to include the proposed RWE improvements.	This is required for improvements that will modify the West End interchange. It is also important because improvements that are recommended in a locally adopted transportation plan may be eligible for state funding per NCDOT's Complete Streets Policy.	X	X		○		○		●				
3. Coordinate with NCDOT to advance RWE recommendations.	Need to determine the appropriate pathway for modifying the West End interchange.	X	X		●	○	●	○	○				
4. Amend the Charlotte Streets Map to reflect recommended streetscape improvements so that adjacent development supports implementation.	Appropriate land development regulations are critical to ensure incremental streetscape improvements from new development/redevelopment support the final plan vision.	X		X	●								
5. Consider identifying a RWE Implementation Committee to oversee the implementation of infrastructure improvements and assist in the evaluation of development proposals.	Membership would include representatives from neighborhood organizations and agency partners.	X	X	X	●	○	○	○		●	●		●
6. Complete a community-based study to guide the design of the proposed park.	Assuming this will become a county-owned/maintained park, Mecklenburg County should lead this study.		X		○	●				○	○	○	○
7. Complete preliminary engineering for RWE improvements to refine project design and cost estimates.	Need to determine the appropriate pathway and lead agency(ies) for proposed improvements.	X	X		●	●	●	○					
8. Determine appropriate pathway for transfer and redevelopment of reclaimed land.	This should be guided through a community-based effort with participation from local stakeholders. This will also require researching any statutory obligations for transferring land previously taken through condemnation. Land transfer should include mechanisms to ensure that subsequent redevelopment supports RWE recommendations.	X	X	X	●	●	●			○	○	○	○
9. Construct infrastructure improvements to support new interchange configuration, new greenway connections, and land reclamation opportunity.	The responsibility and timing for constructing various elements to be determined through previous steps.	X	X		●	●	●					●	

